MARVEL MASTERWORKS®
THE MIGHTY THOR®
VOLUME 15

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EXTRA!! AN ALL-NEW TALES OF ASGARD EPIC!!
THE MIGHTY
THOR®
TM
TAKE YOUR CHOICE, THUNDER GOD-- DEATH BY FIRE--
--OR DEATH AT THE HAND OF ULIK, THE MOST SAVAGE TROLL OF ALL!!

THE MIGHTY THOR Nos. 242-253
ANNUAL No. 5 & MARVEL SPOTLIGHT No. 30
LEN WEIN & JOHN BUSCEMA

MARVEL

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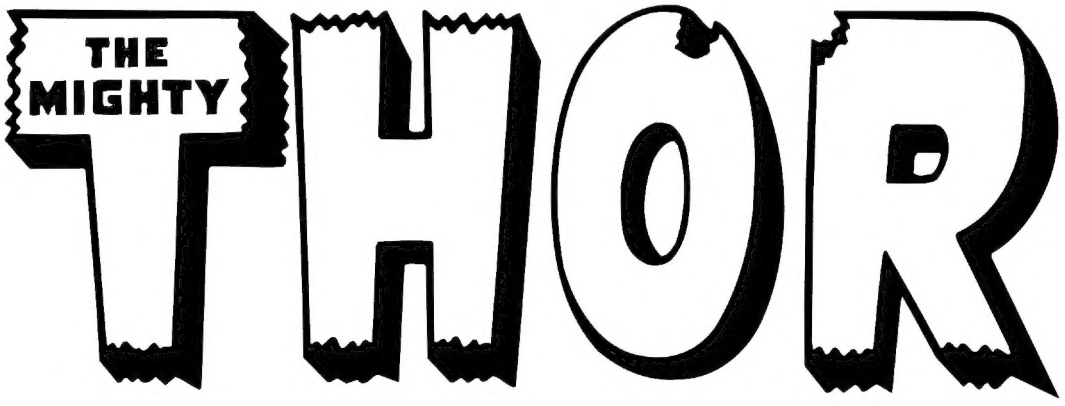
PRESENTS



VOLUME 15

COLLECTING

THE MIGHTY THOR NOS. 242-254

ANNUAL NO. 5 & MARVEL SPOTLIGHT NO. 30

LEN WEIN • JOHN BUSCEMA

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THE
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INTRODUCTION
BY LEN WEIN

In all the decades I've been in this business, going from novels to comic books to animated television to live-action television to film screenplays to video games, I have learned one inalienable fact; writing isn't a revolutionary process, it's an evolutionary progress. You start at Point A intending to wend your way as dramatically and artfully as possible to Point Z, your path clearly marked for you along the way, but the journey becomes the adventure.

You've all seen it happen, especially if you've watched any television over the past half-century (and, let's be honest, who among us hasn't watched a little bit?). The first time I can remember it happening was on the classic '70s sitcom *Happy Days*. In the first episode, there was a leather jacket-wearing, motorcycle-riding bad boy named Arthur Fonzarelli, who had all of one line of dialogue. He was meant to be a background character, there solely to add atmosphere to the proceedings, but there was something so inherently likeable about Henry Winkler, the actor who portrayed the Fonz, as he was called, that he quickly rose to become co-star, then star of the show. Trust me, it was not planned, merely a natural evolution to adjust to the audience's tastes.

Essentially the same thing happened a decade later on a series called *Family Matters*. Actor Jaleel White was hired for the one-shot role of Steve Urkel, named for the writer's childhood friend, television's first African-American nerd. He was supposed to guest once, then gone, but he proved so popular, he came back again and again, until a season or two later, Urkel was the star of the show. This sort of thing happens all the time, which at last brings us to the Mighty Thor.

Think about it. Thor has gone through more than his fair share of changes over the decades. When the series began over 50 years ago (a thought that makes my head hurt at the very concept) in the pages of *Journey Into Mystery*, our hero wasn't even the actual Norse God, he was actually the very human Doctor Don Blake, a lame physician who, on a vacation to Norway, found himself pursued by the invading Stone Men of Saturn (don't ask). Losing his cane while fleeing the Stone Men, Blake replaced it with a wooden walking stick he found in a cave nearby.

Accidentally striking the wooden stick against a wall while trying to ward off the Stone Men, Blake instantly found the stick transformed into the legendary hammer, Mjolnir, and himself reborn as the living embodiment of the Norse Thunder God, Thor.

Doctor Blake discovered an inscription of the side on the hammer, which read "Whosoever Holds This Hammer, If He Be Worthy, Shall Possess The Power of Thor." He quickly learned that striking the stick against any hard surface would transform him into the embodiment of Thor. He also discovered, unfortunately, that were the hammer to be separated from his hand for more than 60 seconds, both he and the hammer would change back to normal.

This basically remained the status quo for the next several years. Oh, Loki was, of course, introduced fairly early on, as were the Enchantress and the Executioner. Our hero eventually made his way to Asgard itself, home of the Norse Gods, where we eventually learned that everything we thought we knew for the first several years of the series had been an outright lie.

Doctor Don Blake, it turned out, never really existed. He was merely a construct of Odin's, designed to hold the spirit of the real Thunder God in order to teach him a lesson in humility as punishment for the crime of hubris. So it was all a fabrication. Without his own knowledge, Don Blake hadn't chosen Norway for his vacation at random; Odin had chosen it for him. Blake hadn't stumbled into that cave and found the magical stick by accident; the All-Father had arranged it all. Don Blake hadn't... Hell, Don Blake didn't really exist.

See what I mean? Writing is an evolutionary process.

Once the truth was revealed, the action of the series moved more and more to immortal Asgard and the mystic realms beyond. Don Blake appeared less and less in the series until he was pretty much written out entirely. With Blake gone, the 60-second limitation on the hammer no longer made any sense, thus Thor and Mjolnir were reunited.

As we spent more and more time in Asgard, the supporting cast grew. Legendary heroes from Norse mythology like Heimdall and Balder, powerful villains like Hela, Mistress of Hel, Fafnir the Fire Demon, the Frost Giants, and, last but certainly not least, Stan and Jack introduced us to a trio of Thor's best friends, the Warriors Three: Fandral the Dashing (based on every Douglas Fairbanks Jr./Errol Flynn swashbuckler epic ever filmed), Hogun the Grim (fashioned after your stoic, tight-lipped heroes of the Clint Eastwood/Charles Bronson type), and the Voluminous Volstagg (loosely based on Shakespeare's recurring Falstaff character). They quickly became the favorites of both the writers and the audience, growing so popular that they eventually warranted their own one-shot pilot issue (which is included in thus volume and, frankly, one of the favorite scripts I've ever written).

By the time I took over writing *The Mighty Thor* from my multi-talented colleague and ex-roommate Gerry Conway, one of the very few things still left from the original concept was the character Jane Foster. Jane had started out as Doctor's Don Blake's scrub nurse and a woman secretly in love with Don. God, romance was so much simpler in those halcyon days. When Jane finally discovered that Don was, in fact, the Norse god Thor, her love grew even deeper. (Big surprise.) From that point on, Jane became one of Thor's companions, accompanying him on his adventures.

So that's where circumstances stood when I began writing the monthly adventures of everyone's favorite Thunder God. But, very quickly, something fascinating began to occur. The monthly mail began to come in. Most of the letters were very positive, as was generally the case, but an ever-increasing number of them started commenting on Thor's relationship with Jane. "Jane is boring," they said in essence, "Jane is stupid and boring and she really should be replaced by Thor's true love, the Goddess Sif." An interesting concept, but not what I had planned, so I let it slide.

Months passed. The mail kept coming. More and more, the message was, "We hate Jane Foster. She's dull and lame and she probably has cooties. Get rid of her. Bring back Lady Sif."

Now, you have to understand, this was fairly early in my career, and I wasn't quite as confident

in my writing skills as I am now. So, "Maybe they're right," I started thinking, "Maybe I should start giving my audience what they want." I thought about it for a month or so, and finally came to a solution (which, never being one to spoil a surprise, you will see for yourself within these very pages) and quickly employed it in the next available issue. "There," I thought, "That should make them happy."

A few months passed. The issue came out as scheduled, and I happily awaited the readers' response. To my astonishment, much of the mail read, "Sif is boring," they said in unison, "Sif is stupid and boring and she really should be replaced by Thor's true love, nurse Jane Foster." This would not necessarily have bothered me much, until I realized... these new letters had come from exactly the same readership who had been complaining about Jane Foster.

After I picked my jaw up off the floor, I thought about it for a while and finally came to the inevitable conclusion: my audience had absolutely no idea what it really wanted and it was my job to give them what I thought they needed. As a result, I've never really listened to the urging of my audience ever since. I started in this industry as a fan, still think like a fan, and so, on the assumption that I basically share the same tastes as my audience, I write what will make me happy and hope they'll feel the same. So far I've generally been extraordinarily lucky in that respect.

Getting the Thor assignment was part of my then-roommate Gerry Conway and then-Editor in Chief Roy Thomas's secret master plan to lure me over to Marvel full-time from our Distinguished Competition. I had been handling a pretty full workload at the Competition while Gerry was essentially employed by Marvel. One evening, Gerry casually mentions that he's about to give up writing *Marvel Team-Up* and asks me if I might be interested in taking it over. A chance to write a title starring Spider-Man, who, until that point, had only been written by Gerry and Stan "The Man" himself? You betcha.

Of course, taking on *Marvel Team-Up* meant giving up one of my DC titles but... c'mon, man, Spider-Man.

And so it went for several months. Gerry would move up from one Marvel title to another, offering me the titles he was leaving behind. The aforementioned *Marvel Team-Up*. *Werewolf by Night*. *Strange Tales* starring Brother Voodoo. *The Defenders* (which came by way of Steve Englehart). And, finally, of course, the flagship book of the Marvel line, *The Amazing Spider-Man* itself. And with each new Marvel title I took on, it meant that was one less title I could write for DC. One morning I woke up to discover I was writing almost my entire workload for Marvel and wasn't even completely certain how I had come to be there.

When I took on *Thor*, I was a little apprehensive, concerned with my ability to get all those "I hath" and "Thou hast" and "He doths" right, but fortunately Roy had been an English teacher in his previous life, and quickly taught me all the rules.

And, of course, no introduction to this volume could possibly be complete without spending a little time talking about the extraordinary artwork of the late, much-missed John Buscema. The legendary Jack "King" Kirby had introduced the magnificent scope and majesty of fabled Asgard, but John added a power and grace that was uniquely his own. John had a way of understanding characters that was positively supernatural in its depth. In John's stories, every pose was unique to the character at hand, every gesture, every expression. No two characters would ever sit the same in a John Buscema story, and nobody could put a figure in a chair like John. You could feel every ounce of that character's weight as he or she sat, feel the weighty matters that stooped their shoulders. Page through this volume, and see if you don't agree.

The funny (and perhaps most endearing) thing about John was that he never thought of himself as anyone special. He always claimed he was just a journeyman artist, nobody special. He claimed he never put much thought into the work, just drew what he was asked, but that couldn't possibly be further from the truth.

In all the years John and I worked together, I can never remember a single panel where two characters who have essentially the same color scheme ever stood together. John designed every panel so that every character would pop. Some of you may remember a wonderful over-sized pin-up poster that featured virtually every hero in the Marvel Universe at the time. Easily 65-70 characters, if not more, and once again, no two costumes clashed. I even vividly remember that the only spot where John might have had a problem, where the Human Torch was flying side-by-side with Doctor Strange, he had managed to turn Doc's Cloak of Levitation so that the yellow trim of the cape was up against the Torch, not the cape's primarily red body.

A man who never really thought about what he was doing, my butt. At any rate, those are pretty much all of my remembrances from those halcyon days. Let's face it, True Believers, it has been almost four decades since I first wrote 'em.

The last thing I should explain, I suppose, is the *Thor Annual* reprinted here with excellent work by writer Steve Englehart and "Big" John Buscema. At one point during the brief (and I do mean brief) heyday of the Marvel black-and-white line, the Powers That Be decided to do a *Thor the Mighty* title like the 1977 *The Rampaging Hulk* magazine. Two issues were prepared, but by the time they were done, minds had been changed and the project stopped.

Mighty Marvel, never one to waste good work, turned the first issue of the aborted magazine into the enclosed Annual. The other issue, by your Humble Scribe and the tremendously talented Jim Starlin, became an issue of *Marvel Preview*. That's a treat you'll have to wait until next volume to read.

So, what I suggest you do now, my friend, is drag your most comfortable recliner up to your crackling hearthstone, fill a flagon with your finest mead, and prepare to be entertained.

As it says in the small print at the beginning of this volume, "Whosoever Holds This Collection, If He Be Worthy, Shall Enjoy the Power of Thor."

Len Wein
Northridge, CA
October 13, 2015

THOR
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
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THE MIGHTY
THOR
WHEN THE SERVITOR COMMANDS...
...CAN EVEN A THUNDER GOD SAY HIM NAY?

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR! ™
WHEN THE SERVITOR COMMANDS!
LESS THAN A MINUTE PAST, THE GOD OF THUNDER THOR, HIS LADY JANE FOSTER, HIS AMNESIAC FATHER ODIN, AND THREE BEINGS WHO CLAIMED TO BE THE EGYPTIAN GODS HORUS, OSIRIS, AND ISIS, ENTERED THIS DUST-CAKED PYRAMID THAT HAD SPROUTED FULL-BLOWN AMID THE ORANGE GROVES OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA.
NOW, THE TWO ASGARDIANS AND THE MORTAL WOMAN SUDDENLY EMERGE FROM THE ANCIENT STRUCTURE ALONE -- AND THE EXCITE-MENT THAT RUNS RAMPANT THRU THE CROWD IS AN ALMOST TANGIBLE THING...
THANK HEAVEN -- THEY'RE NOT HURT!
HEY, HARRY -- C'MERE QUICK! THIS YA GOTTA SEE!
I SEEN LONGHAIR FREAKS BEFORE -- BUT THESE DUDES TAKE THE CAKE!
POMP AND PAGEANTRY ON A COSMIC SCALE WITH:
LEN WEIN
SPANKING-NEW SCRIPTER/EDITOR
JOHN BUSCEMA & JOE SINNOTT
SAME OLD ILLUSTRATORS
GLYNIS WEIN colorist
JOHN COSTANZA letterer
HONORARY ASGARDIANS ALL!

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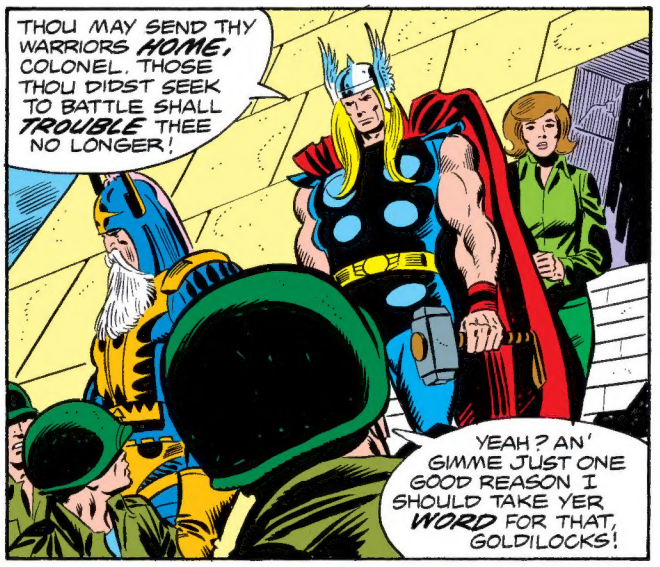
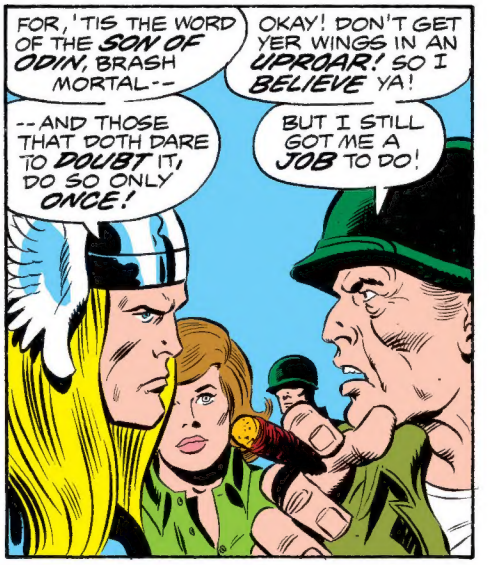
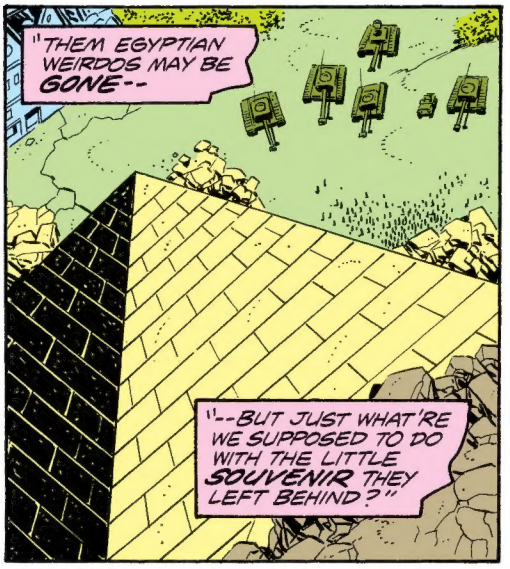
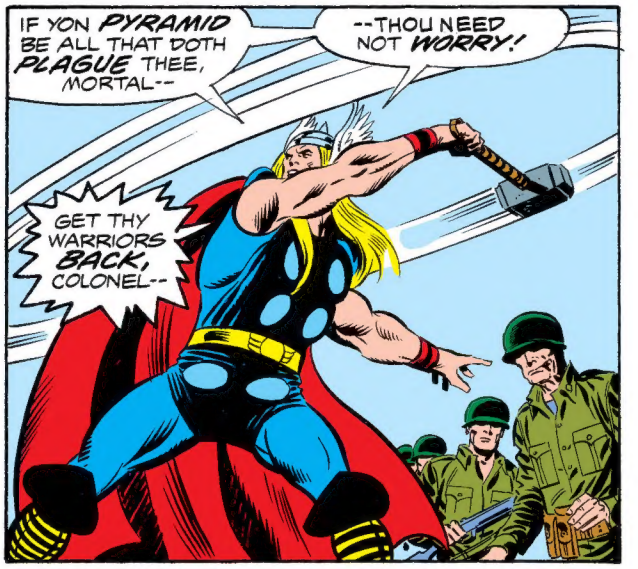
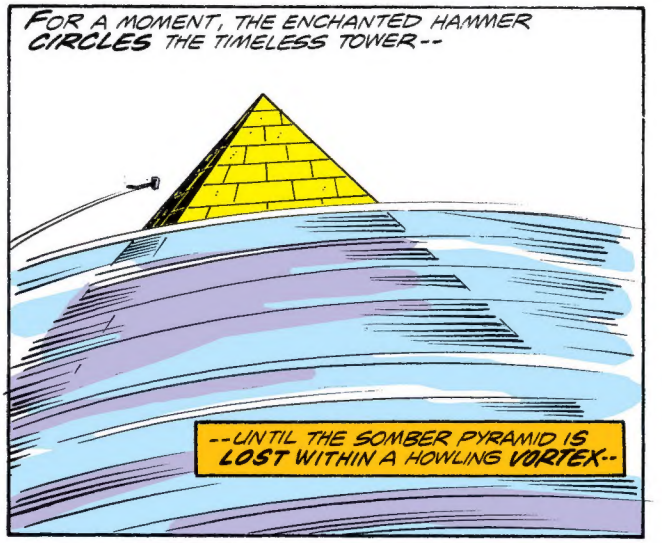

THOU MAY SEND THY WARRIORS HOME, COLONEL, THOSE THOU DIDST SEEK TO BATTLE SHALL TROUBLE THEE NO LONGER!
YEAH? AN' GIMME JUST ONE GOOD REASON I SHOULD TAKE YER WORD FOR THAT, GOLDILOCKS!

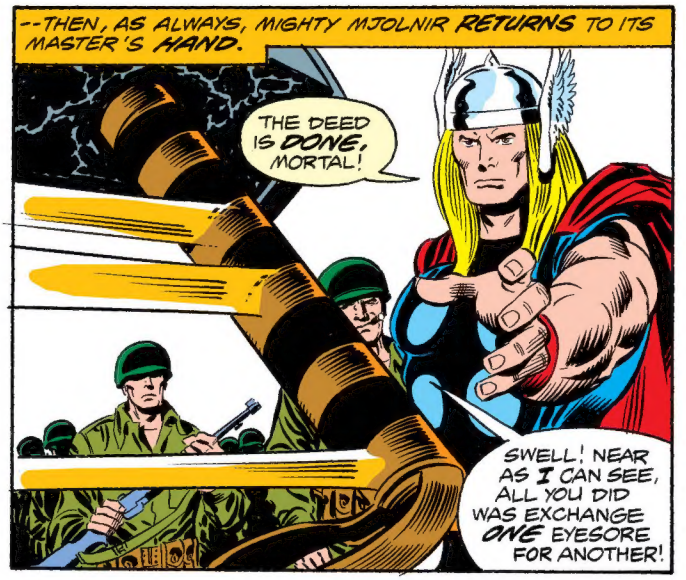

FOR, 'TIS THE WORD OF THE SON OF ODIN, BRASH MORTAL--
--AND THOSE THAT DOTH DARE TO DOUBT IT, DO SO ONLY ONCE!
OKAY! DON'T GET YER WINGS IN AN UPROAR! SO I BELIEVE YA!
BUT I STILL GOT ME A JOB TO DO!

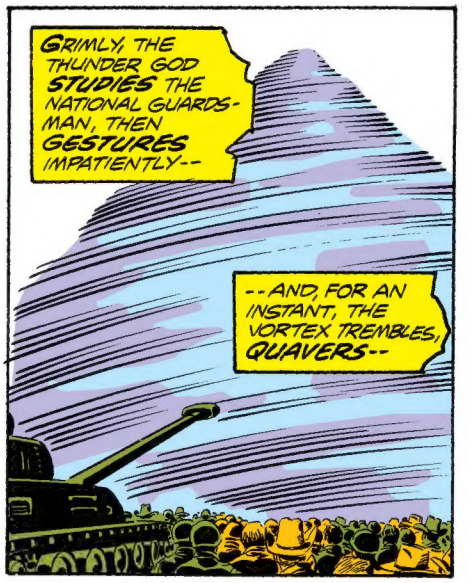

"THEM EGYPTIAN WEIRDOS MAY BE GONE--
"--BUT JUST WHAT'RE WE SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THE LITTLE SOUVENIR THEY LEFT BEHIND?"

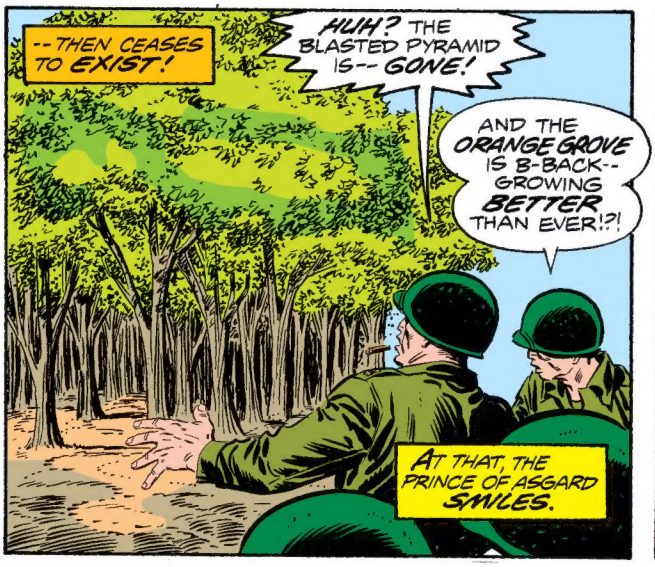

IF YON PYRAMID BE ALL THAT DOTH PLAGUE THEE, MORTAL--
--THOU NEED NOT WORRY!
GET THY WARRIORS BACK, COLONEL--

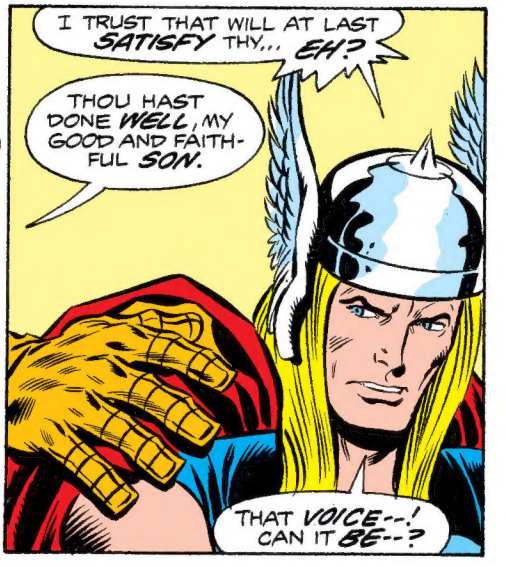
--AND LET THE GOD OF THUNDER DO WHAT MUST BE DONE--
--AS ONLY HE WHO WIELDS MYSTIC MJOLNIR CAN!

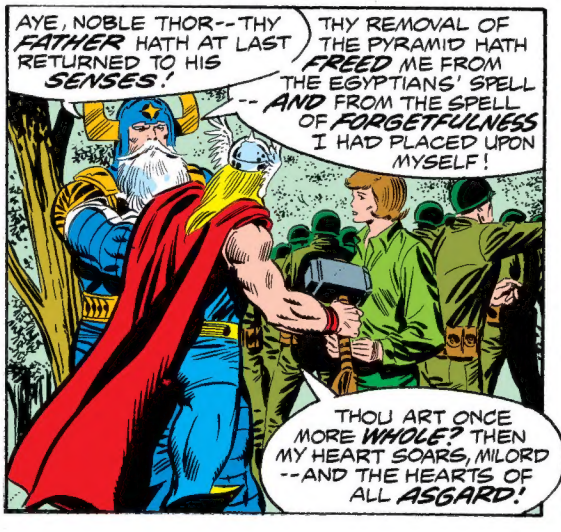

FOR A MOMENT, THE ENCHANTED HAMMER CIRCLES THE TIMELESS TOWER--
--UNTIL THE SOMBER PYRAMID IS LOST WITHIN A HOWLING VORTEX--

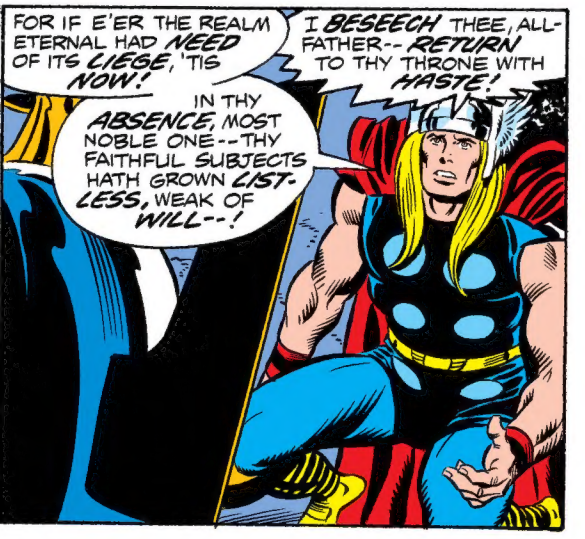

--THEN, AS ALWAYS, MIGHTY MJOLNIR RETURNS TO ITS MASTER'S HAND.
THE DEED IS DONE, MORTAL!
SWELL! NEAR AS I CAN SEE, ALL YOU DID WAS EXCHANGE ONE EYESORE FOR ANOTHER!

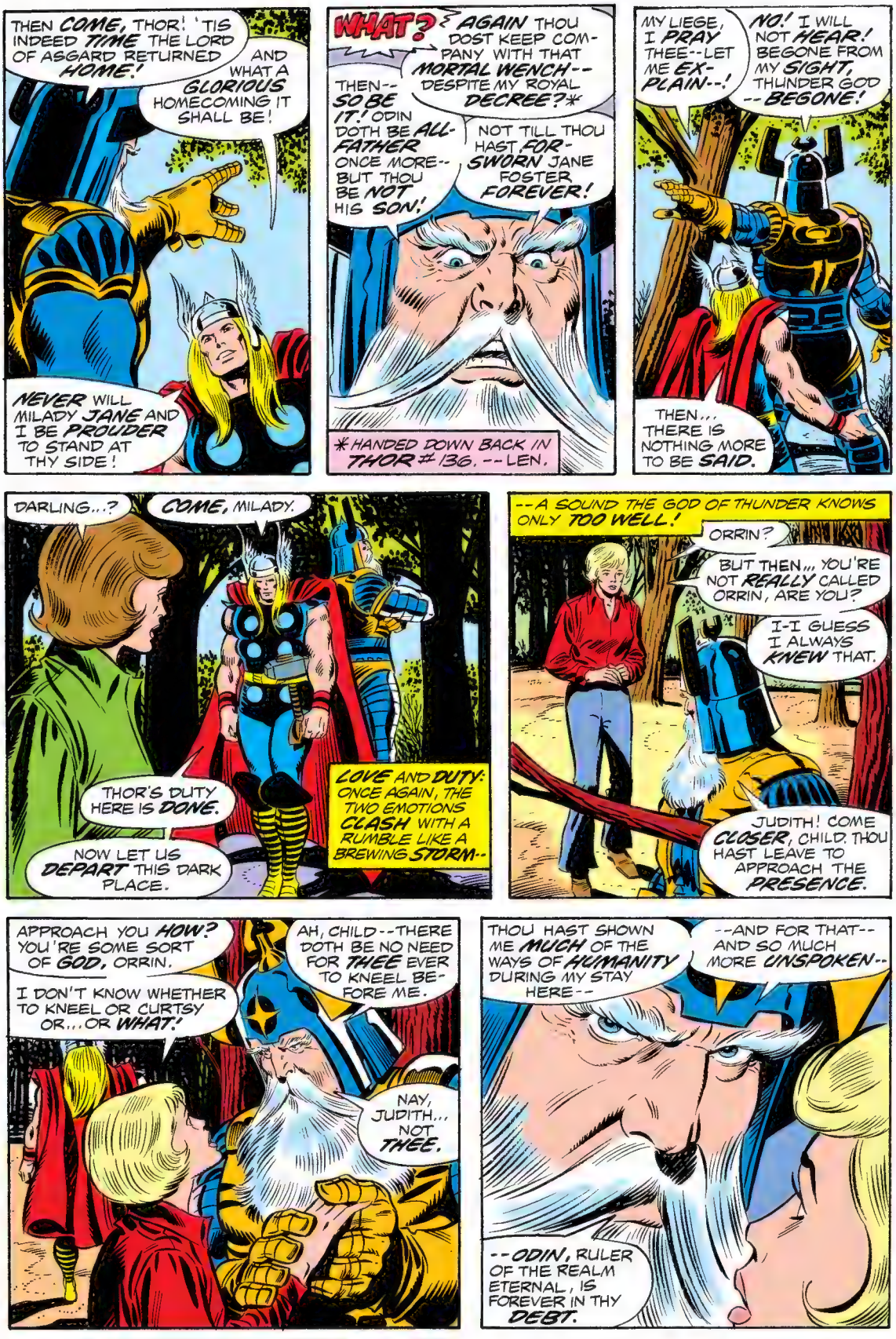

GRIMLY, THE THUNDER GOD STUDIES THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN, THEN GESTURES IMPATIENTLY--
--AND, FOR AN INSTANT, THE VORTEX TREMBLES, QUAVERS--

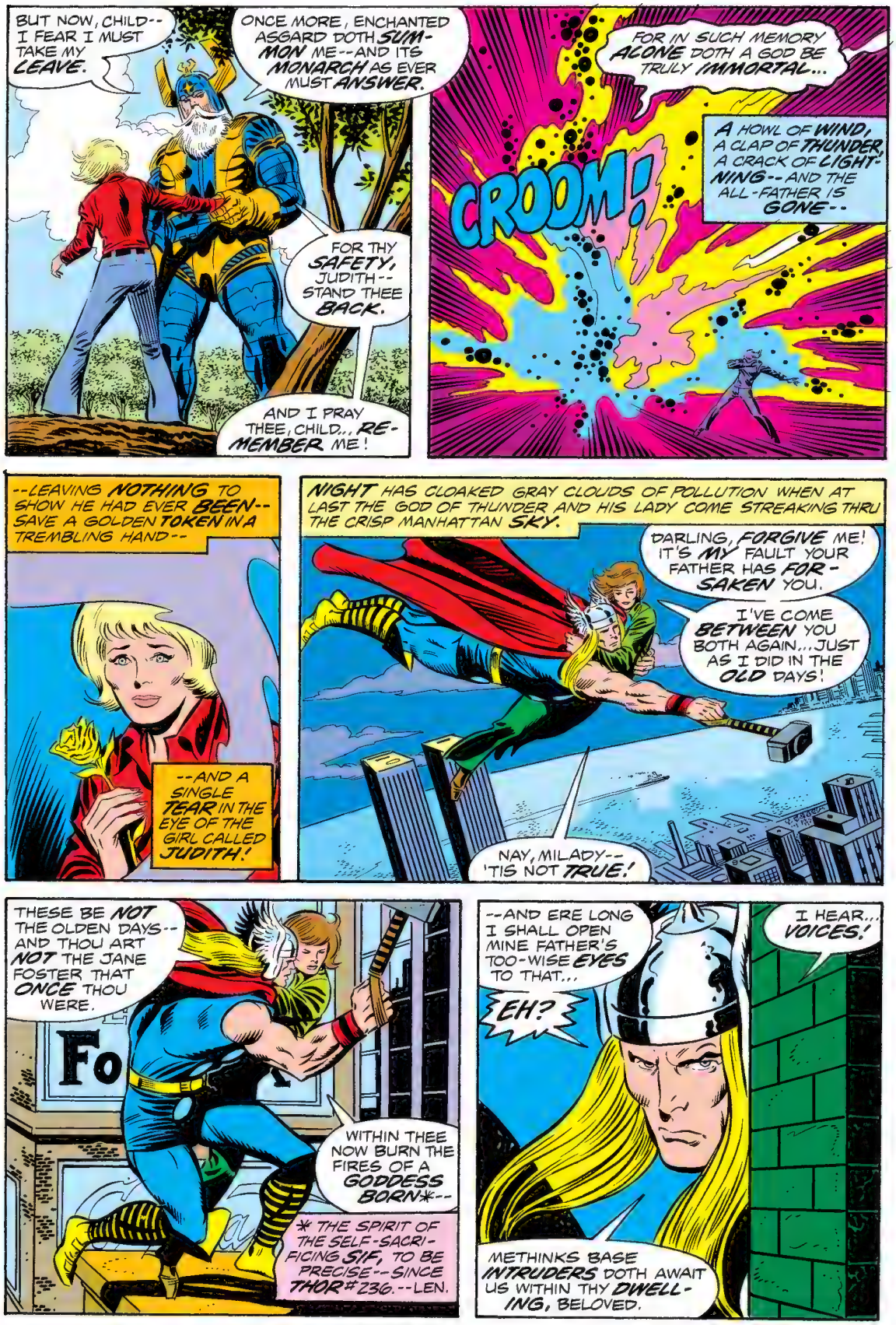

--THEN CEASES TO EXIST!
HUH? THE BLASTED PYRAMID IS-- GONE!
AND THE ORANGE GROVE IS B-BACK-- GROWING BETTER THAN EVER!?!
AT THAT, THE PRINCE OF ASGARD SMILES.

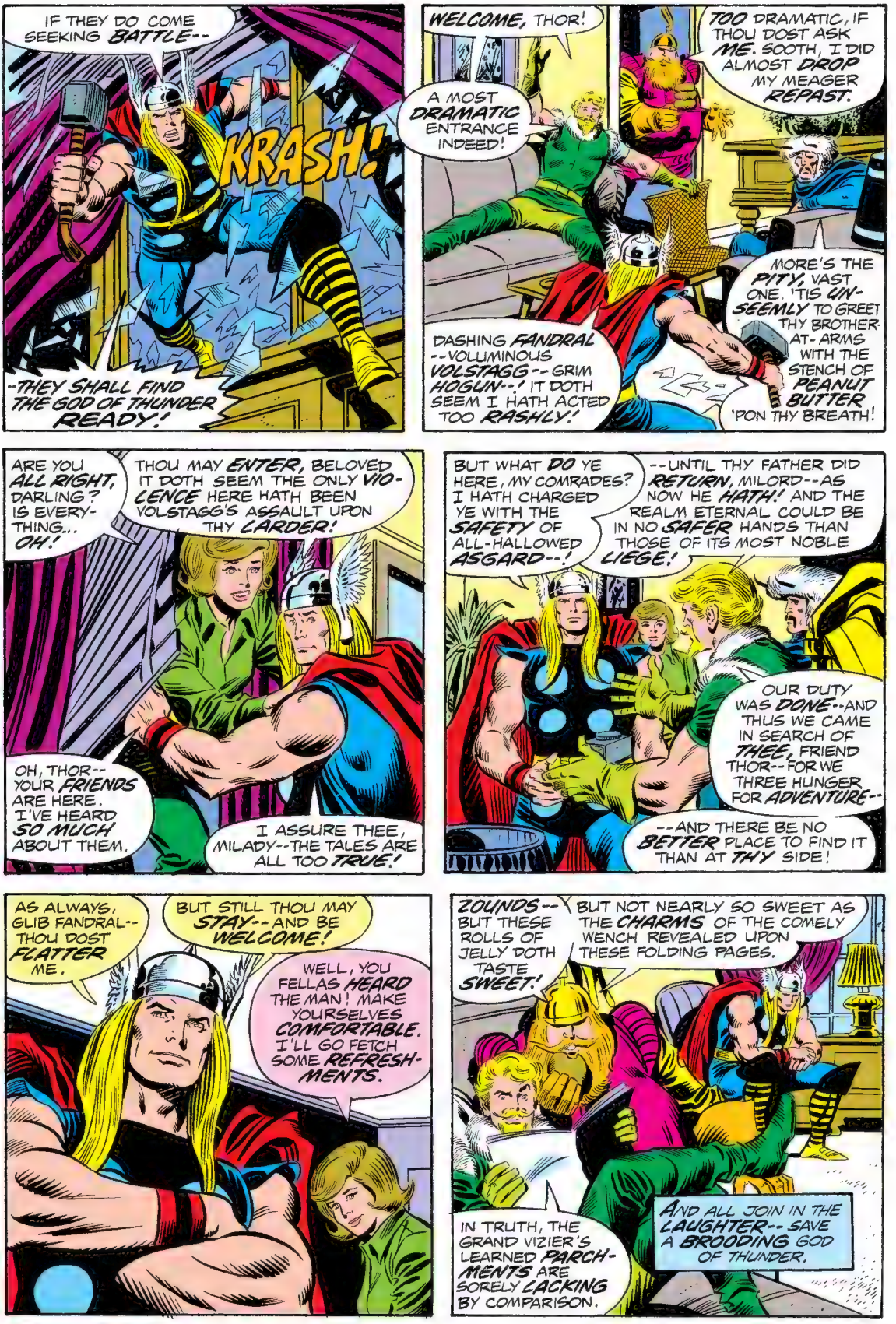

I TRUST THAT WILL AT LAST SATISFY THY,,, EH?
THOU HAST DONE WELL, MY GOOD AND FAITHFUL SON.
THAT VOICE--! CAN IT BE--?

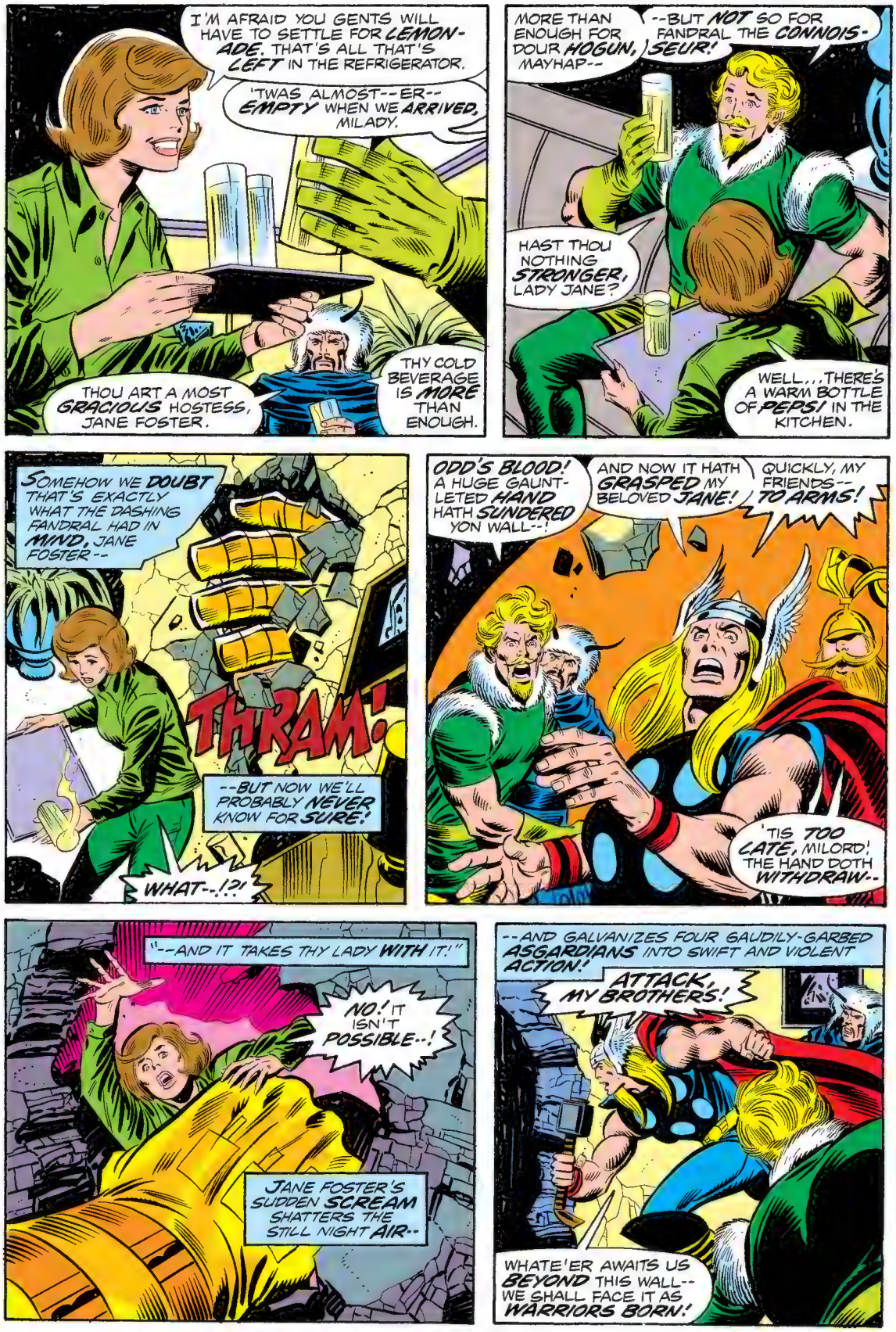

AYE, NOBLE THOR--THY FATHER HATH AT LAST RETURNED TO HIS SENSES!
THY REMOVAL OF THE PYRAMID HATH FREED ME FROM THE EGYPTIANS' SPELL -- AND FROM THE SPELL OF FORGETFULNESS I HAD PLACED UPON MYSELF!
THOU ART ONCE MORE WHOLE? THEN MY HEART SOARS, MILORD --AND THE HEARTS OF ALL ASGARD!

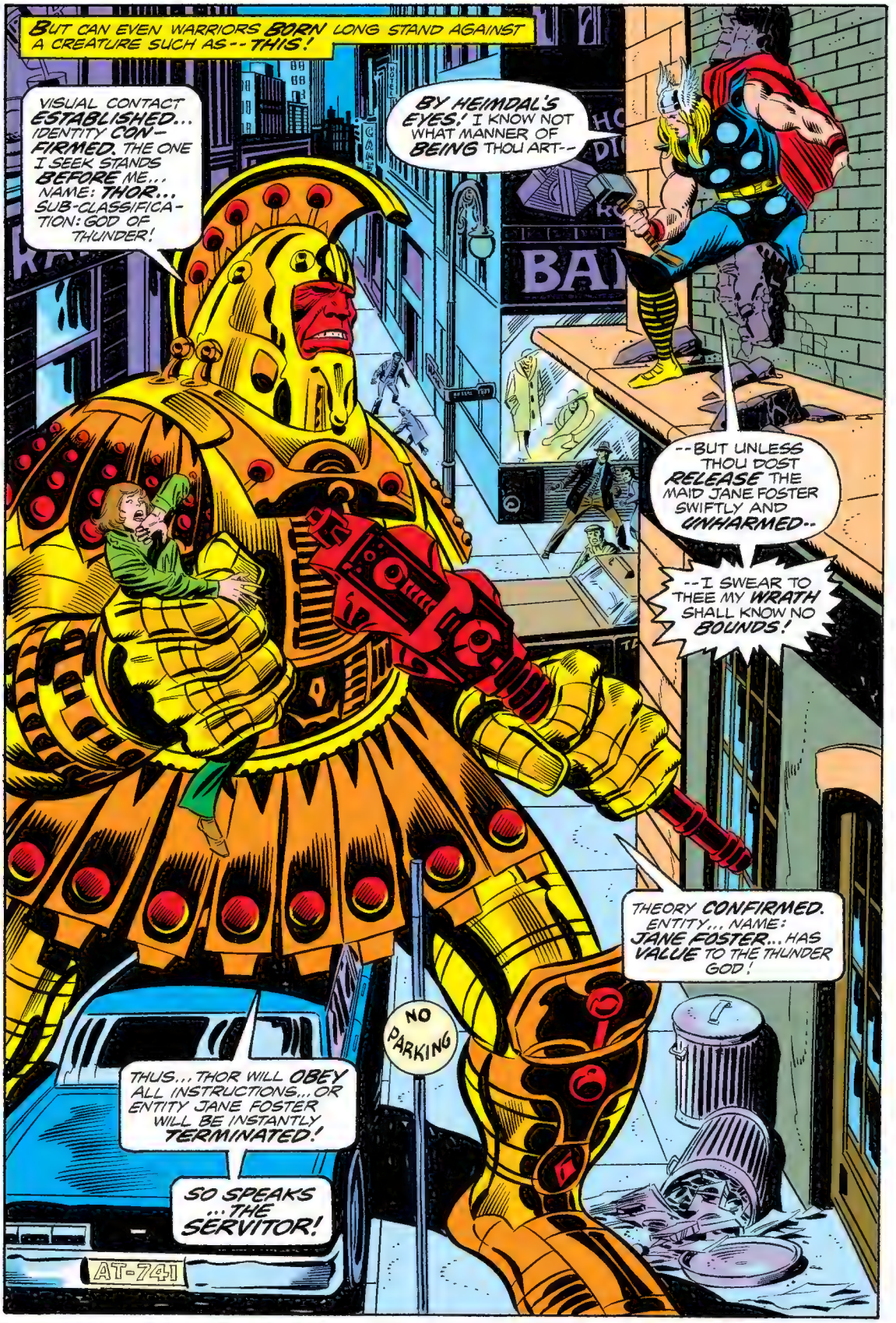

FOR IF E'ER THE REALM ETERNAL HAD NEED OF ITS LIEGE, 'TIS NOW!
IN THY ABSENCE, MOST NOBLE ONE--THY FAITHFUL SUBJECTS HATH GROWN LISTLESS, WEAK OF WILL--!
I BESEECH THEE, ALL-FATHER-- RETURN TO THY THRONE WITH HASTE!

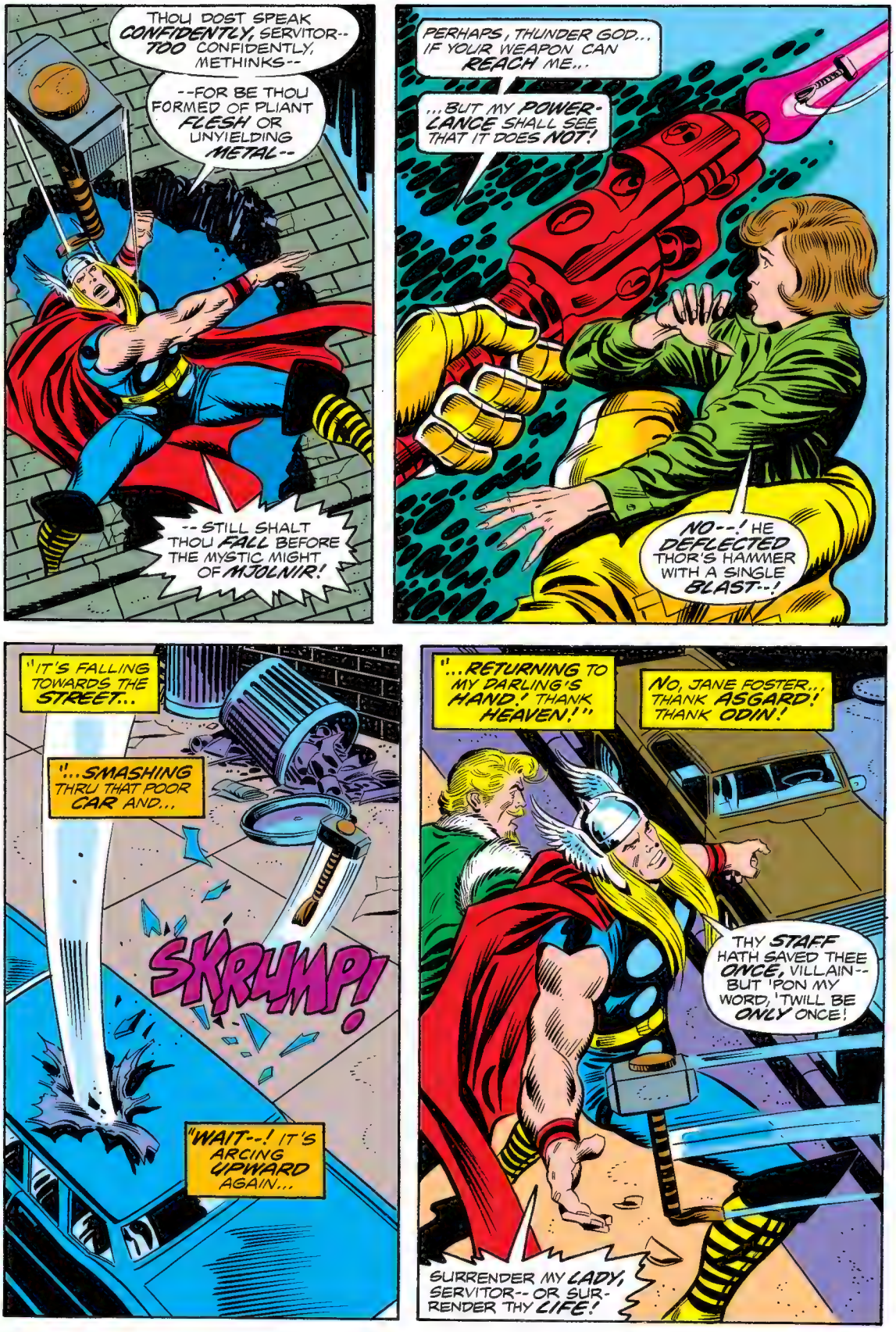

THEN COME, THOR! 'TIS INDEED TIME THE LORD OF ASGARD RETURNED HOME!
AND WHAT A GLORIOUS HOMECOMING IT SHALL BE!
NEVER WILL MILADY JANE AND I BE PROUDER TO STAND AT THY SIDE!
WHAT? AGAIN THOU DOST KEEP COMPANY WITH THAT MORTAL WENCH-- DESPITE MY ROYAL DECREE?*
THEN-- SO BE IT! ODIN DOTH BE ALL-FATHER ONCE MORE-- BUT THOU BE NOT HIS SON!
NOT TILL THOU HAST FORSWORN JANE FOSTER FOREVER!
*HANDED DOWN BACK IN THOR #136. --LEN.
MY LIEGE, I PRAY THEE--LET ME EXPLAIN--!
NO! I WILL NOT HEAR! BEGONE FROM MY SIGHT, THUNDER GOD --BEGONE!
THEN... THERE IS NOTHING MORE TO BE SAID.
DARLING...?
COME, MILADY.
THOR'S DUTY HERE IS DONE.
NOW LET US DEPART THIS DARK PLACE.
LOVE AND DUTY: ONCE AGAIN, THE TWO EMOTIONS CLASH WITH A RUMBLE LIKE A BREWING STORM--
--A SOUND THE GOD OF THUNDER KNOWS ONLY TOO WELL!
ORRIN?
BUT THEN... YOU'RE NOT REALLY CALLED ORRIN, ARE YOU?
I-I GUESS I ALWAYS KNEW THAT.
JUDITH! COME CLOSER, CHILD. THOU HAST LEAVE TO APPROACH THE PRESENCE.
APPROACH YOU HOW? YOU'RE SOME SORT OF GOD, ORRIN.
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO KNEEL OR CURTSY OR... OR WHAT!
AH, CHILD--THERE DOTH BE NO NEED FOR THEE EVER TO KNEEL BEFORE ME.
NAY, JUDITH... NOT THEE.
THOU HAST SHOWN ME MUCH OF THE WAYS OF HUMANITY DURING MY STAY HERE--
--AND FOR THAT-- AND SO MUCH MORE UNSPOKEN--
--ODIN, RULER OF THE REALM ETERNAL, IS FOREVER IN THY DEBT.


BUT NOW, CHILD-- I FEAR I MUST TAKE MY LEAVE.
ONCE MORE, ENCHANTED ASGARD DOTH SUMMON ME--AND ITS MONARCH AS EVER MUST ANSWER.
FOR THY SAFETY, JUDITH-- STAND THEE BACK.
AND I PRAY THEE, CHILD,, REMEMBER ME!
FOR IN SUCH MEMORY ALONE DOTH A GOD BE TRULY IMMORTAL...
CROOM!
A HOWL OF WIND, A CLAP OF THUNDER, A CRACK OF LIGHTNING-- AND THE ALL-FATHER IS GONE--
--LEAVING NOTHING TO SHOW HE HAD EVER BEEN-- SAVE A GOLDEN TOKEN IN A TREMBLING HAND--
--AND A SINGLE TEAR IN THE EYE OF THE GIRL CALLED JUDITH!
NIGHT HAS CLOAKED GRAY CLOUDS OF POLLUTION WHEN AT LAST THE GOD OF THUNDER AND HIS LADY COME STREAKING THRU THE CRISP MANHATTAN SKY.
DARLING, FORGIVE ME! IT'S MY FAULT YOUR FATHER HAS FORSAKEN YOU.
I'VE COME BETWEEN YOU BOTH AGAIN,,,JUST AS I DID IN THE OLD DAYS!
NAY, MILADY-- 'TIS NOT TRUE!
THESE BE NOT THE OLDEN DAYS-- AND THOU ART NOT THE JANE FOSTER THAT ONCE THOU WERE.
WITHIN THEE NOW BURN THE FIRES OF A GODDESS BORN*--
* THE SPIRIT OF THE SELF-SACRIFICING SIF, TO BE PRECISE--SINCE THOR #236.--LEN.
--AND ERE LONG I SHALL OPEN MINE FATHER'S TOO-WISE EYES TO THAT...
EH?
I HEAR... VOICES!
METHINKS BASE INTRUDERS DOTH AWAIT US WITHIN THY DWELLING, BELOVED.


IF THEY DO COME SEEKING BATTLE--
KRASH!
--THEY SHALL FIND THE GOD OF THUNDER READY!
WELCOME, THOR!
A MOST DRAMATIC ENTRANCE INDEED!
TOO DRAMATIC, IF THOU DOST ASK ME. SOOTH, I DID ALMOST DROP MY MEAGER REPAST.
DASHING FANDRAL --VOLUMINOUS VOLSTAGG--GRIM HOGUN--! IT DOTH SEEM I HATH ACTED TOO RASHLY!
MORE'S THE PITY, VAST ONE. 'TIS UNSEEMLY TO GREET THY BROTHER-AT-ARMS WITH THE STENCH OF PEANUT BUTTER 'PON THY BREATH!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, DARLING? IS EVERYTHING... OH!
THOU MAY ENTER, BELOVED IT DOTH SEEM THE ONLY VIOLENCE HERE HATH BEEN VOLSTAGG'S ASSAULT UPON THY LARDER!
OH, THOR--YOUR FRIENDS ARE HERE. I'VE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT THEM.
I ASSURE THEE, MILADY--THE TALES ARE ALL TOO TRUE!
BUT WHAT DO YE HERE, MY COMRADES? I HATH CHARGED YE WITH THE SAFETY OF ALL-HALLOWED ASGARD--!
--UNTIL THY FATHER DID RETURN, MILORD--AS NOW HE HATH! AND THE REALM ETERNAL COULD BE IN NO SAFER HANDS THAN THOSE OF ITS MOST NOBLE LIEGE!
OUR DUTY WAS DONE--AND THUS WE CAME IN SEARCH OF THEE, FRIEND THOR--FOR WE THREE HUNGER FOR ADVENTURE--
--AND THERE BE NO BETTER PLACE TO FIND IT THAN AT THY SIDE!
AS ALWAYS, GLIB FANDRAL--THOU DOST FLATTER ME.
BUT STILL THOU MAY STAY--AND BE WELCOME!
WELL, YOU FELLAS HEARD THE MAN! MAKE YOURSELVES COMFORTABLE. I'LL GO FETCH SOME REFRESHMENTS.
ZOUNDS--BUT THESE ROLLS OF JELLY DOTH TASTE SWEET!
BUT NOT NEARLY SO SWEET AS THE CHARMS OF THE COMELY WENCH REVEALED UPON THESE FOLDING PAGES.
IN TRUTH, THE GRAND VIZIER'S LEARNED PARCHMENTS ARE SORELY LACKING BY COMPARISON.
AND ALL JOIN IN THE LAUGHTER--SAVE A BROODING GOD OF THUNDER.

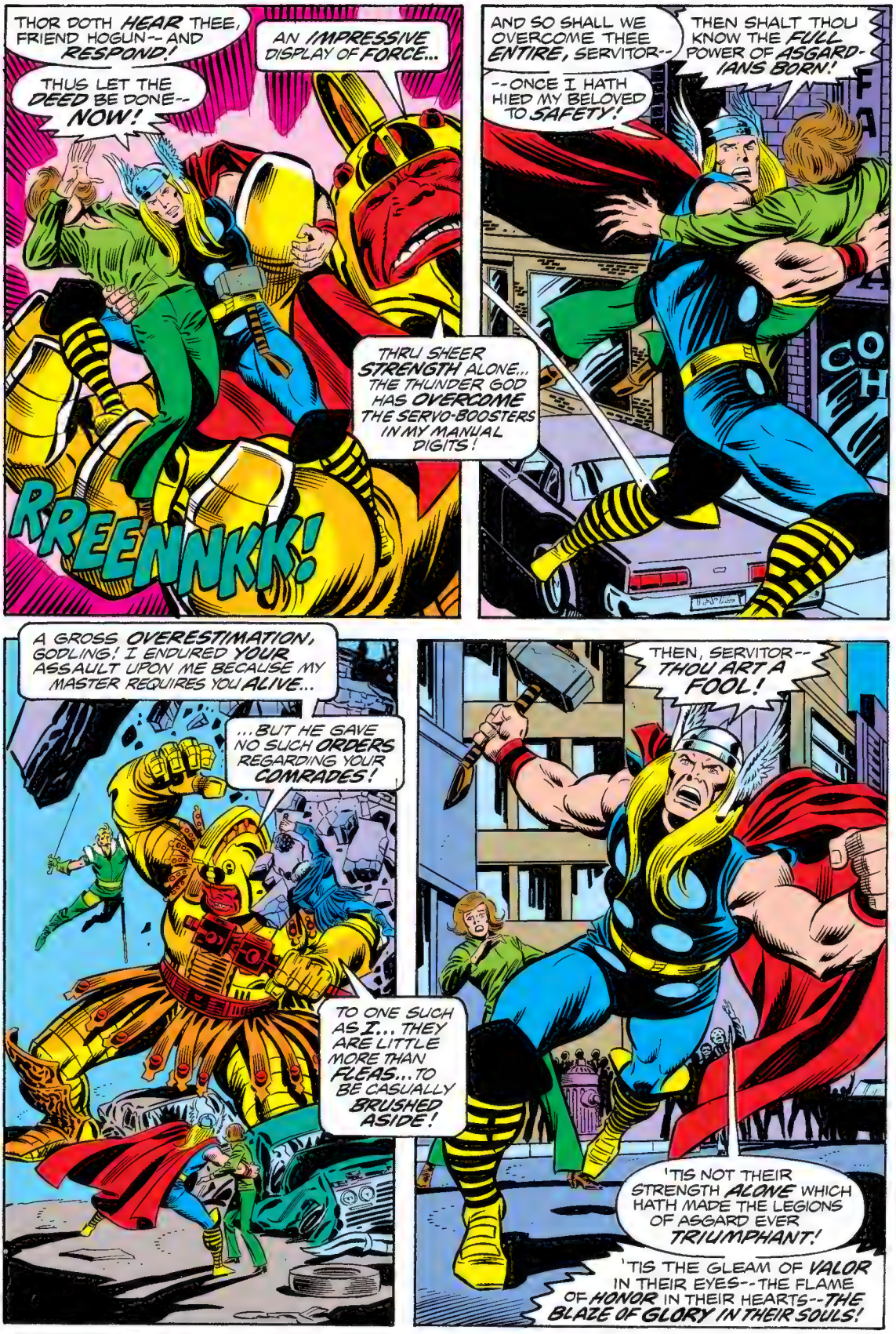

I'M AFRAID YOU GENTS WILL HAVE TO SETTLE FOR LEMONADE. THAT'S ALL THAT'S LEFT IN THE REFRIGERATOR.
'TWAS ALMOST--ER--EMPTY WHEN WE ARRIVED, MILADY.
THOU ART A MOST GRACIOUS HOSTESS, JANE FOSTER.
THY COLD BEVERAGE IS MORE THAN ENOUGH.
MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR DOUR HOGUN, MAYHAP--
--BUT NOT SO FOR FANDRAL THE CONNOISSEUR!
HAST THOU NOTHING STRONGER, LADY JANE?
WELL...THERE'S A WARM BOTTLE OF PEPS! IN THE KITCHEN.
SOMEHOW WE DOUBT THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT THE DASHING FANDRAL HAD IN MIND, JANE FOSTER--
THRAM!
--BUT NOW WE'LL PROBABLY NEVER KNOW FOR SURE!
WHAT--!?!
ODD'S BLOOD! A HUGE GAUNTLETED HAND HATH SUNDERED YON WALL--!
AND NOW IT HATH GRASPED MY BELOVED JANE!
QUICKLY, MY FRIENDS--TO ARMS!
'TIS TOO LATE, MILORD! THE HAND DOTH WITHDRAW--
"--AND IT TAKES THY LADY WITH IT!"
NO! IT ISN'T POSSIBLE--!
JANE FOSTER'S SUDDEN SCREAM SHATTERS THE STILL NIGHT AIR--
--AND GALVANIZES FOUR GAUDILY-GARBED ASGARDIANS INTO SWIFT AND VIOLENT ACTION!
ATTACK, MY BROTHERS!
WHATE'ER AWAITS US BEYOND THIS WALL--WE SHALL FACE IT AS WARRIORS BORN!


BUT CAN EVEN WARRIORS BORN LONG STAND AGAINST A CREATURE SUCH AS--THIS!
VISUAL CONTACT ESTABLISHED... IDENTITY CONFIRMED. THE ONE I SEEK STANDS BEFORE ME... NAME: THOR... SUB-CLASSIFICATION: GOD OF THUNDER!
BY HEIMDAL'S EYES! I KNOW NOT WHAT MANNER OF BEING THOU ART--
--BUT UNLESS THOU DOST RELEASE THE MAID JANE FOSTER SWIFTLY AND UNHARMED--
--I SWEAR TO THEE MY WRATH SHALL KNOW NO BOUNDS!
THEORY CONFIRMED. ENTITY... NAME: JANE FOSTER... HAS VALUE TO THE THUNDER GOD!
NO PARKING
THUS... THOR WILL OBEY ALL INSTRUCTIONS... OR ENTITY JANE FOSTER WILL BE INSTANTLY TERMINATED!
SO SPEAKS ...THE SERVITOR!
AT-741

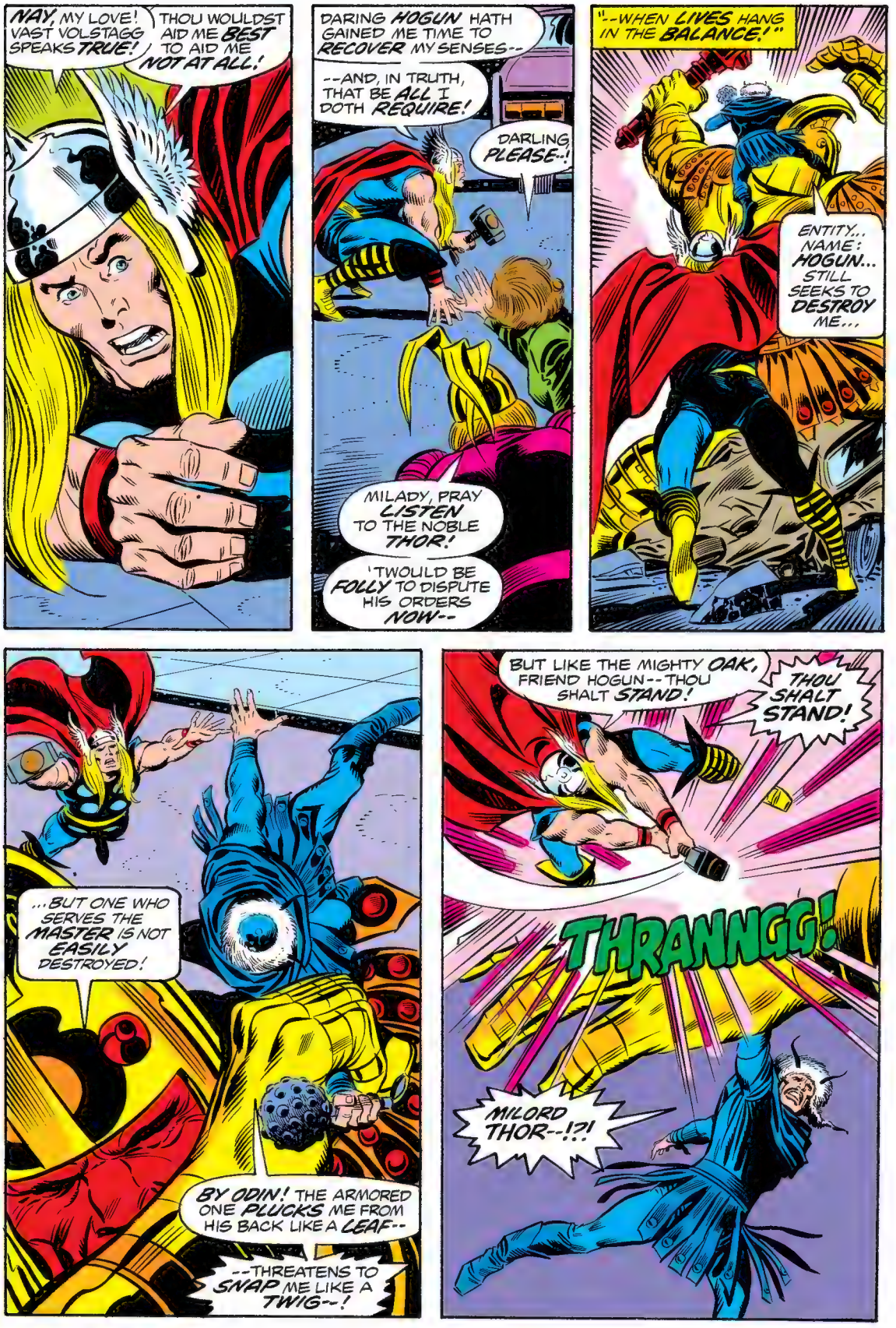

THOU DOST SPEAK CONFIDENTLY, SERVITOR-- TOO CONFIDENTLY, METHINKS--
--FOR BE THOU FORMED OF PLIANT FLESH OR UNYIELDING METAL--
--STILL SHALT THOU FALL BEFORE THE MYSTIC MIGHT OF MJOLNIR!
PERHAPS, THUNDER GOD.., IF YOUR WEAPON CAN REACH ME...
...BUT MY POWER-LANCE SHALL SEE THAT IT DOES NOT!
NO--! HE DEFLECTED THOR'S HAMMER WITH A SINGLE BLAST--!
"IT'S FALLING TOWARDS THE STREET...
"...SMASHING THRU THAT POOR CAR AND...
SKRUMP!
"WAIT--! IT'S ARCING UPWARD AGAIN...
"...RETURNING TO MY DARLING'S HAND! THANK HEAVEN!"
NO, JANE FOSTER... THANK ASGARD! THANK ODIN!
THY STAFF HATH SAVED THEE ONCE, VILLAIN-- BUT 'PON MY WORD, 'TWILL BE ONLY ONCE!
SURRENDER MY LADY, SERVITOR-- OR SURRENDER THY LIFE!

MY MASTER SENT ME TO EMPLOY YOU IN HIS SERVICE, THUNDER GOD! SWEAR TO SERVE HIM FAITHFULLY... AND THE FEMALE GOES FREE!
REFUSE... AND I WILL CRUSH JANE FOSTER TO PULP!
WHAT IS YOUR ANSWER, THOR?
FOUL VILLAIN! THOR DOTH SAY THEE--NEVER!
NEVER WILL I SUBMIT TO SUCH AS THEE!
AYE, MILORD-- SO SAY WE ALL!
THEN WIELD THY DARK MACE WELL, FRIEND HOGUN!
'TIS OUR TASK TO DISTRACT THIS LUMBERING MAN-MOUNTAIN --WHILST OUR PRINCE DOTH SEEK TO SAVE HIS LADY!
BE OF STOUT HEART, BELOVED!
'TWILL TAKE BUT A MOMENT TO WREST THEE FREE OF THIS GREAT CLUTCHING FIST!
HURRY, DARLING-- HURRY!

OH, THE UTTER IGNOMINITY OF IT ALL!
THAT MINE COMRADES SHOULD GO BOLDLY INTO BATTLE WITHOUT VALOROUS VOLSTAGG TO PROUDLY LEAD THE CHARGE!
WHO'D E'ER HAVE THOUGHT TO SEE THE LION OF ASGARD THUS THWARTED -- A HELPLESS PRISONER UPON SO PRECARIOUS A PERCH!
SURELY THE FICKLE FATES MUST CHORTLE AT THE IRONY -- THAT THE BOLDEST OF THE BOLD SHOULD BE UNABLE TO...
ZOUNDS!
CRRUMP
THE PRECIPICE DOTH CRUMBLE -- VALIANT VOLSTAGG DOTH FALL --!
BY ODIN! IT DOTH APPEAR I HATH ACCOMPLISHED MY DESCENT AS I DESIRED!
BUT PERHAPS I SHOULD -- ER -- STAND BACK FROM THE RAGING BATTLE FOR THE NONCE --
-- UNTIL I HATH ASCERTAINED WHERE VIGOROUS VOLSTAGG'S MANY SKILLS MAY BEST BE EMPLOYED!
TWHUDD!
HAVE FAITH, MY LOVE!
THOUGH THESE MASSIVE FINGERS BE AS TIGHTLY CLENCHED AS THE BLAZING JAWS OF FAFNIR THE DRAGON --
-- STILL SHALT THE RIGHTEOUS FURY OF THOR PRY THEM ASUNDER!
THEN PRAY DO SO WITH HASTE, THUNDER GOD!
METHINKS OUR MIGHTIEST BLOWS DOTH BE LITTLE MORE THAN AN ANNOYANCE TO THIS ARMORED BEHEMOTH!
CROOM!

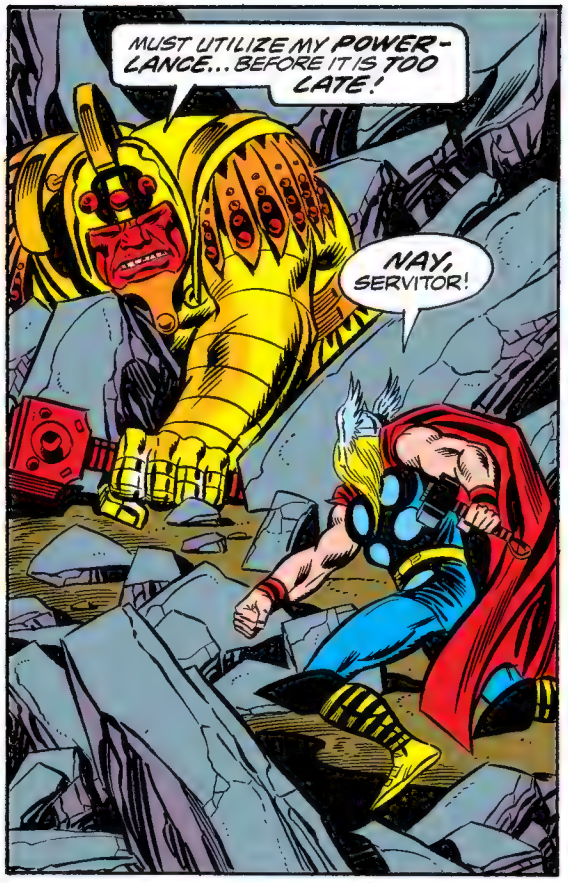

THOR DOTH HEAR THEE, FRIEND HOGUN--AND RESPOND!
AN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF FORCE...
THUS LET THE DEED BE DONE--NOW!
THRU SHEER STRENGTH ALONE... THE THUNDER GOD HAS OVERCOME THE SERVO-BOOSTERS IN MY MANUAL DIGITS!
RREENNKK!
AND SO SHALL WE OVERCOME THEE ENTIRE, SERVITOR--
--ONCE I HATH HIED MY BELOVED TO SAFETY!
THEN SHALT THOU KNOW THE FULL POWER OF ASGARDIANS BORN!
A GROSS OVERESTIMATION, GODLING! I ENDURED YOUR ASSAULT UPON ME BECAUSE MY MASTER REQUIRES YOU ALIVE...
...BUT HE GAVE NO SUCH ORDERS REGARDING YOUR COMRADES!
TO ONE SUCH AS I... THEY ARE LITTLE MORE THAN FLEAS... TO BE CASUALLY BRUSHED ASIDE!
THEN, SERVITOR--THOU ART A FOOL!
'TIS NOT THEIR STRENGTH ALONE WHICH HATH MADE THE LEGIONS OF ASGARD EVER TRIUMPHANT!
'TIS THE GLEAM OF VALOR IN THEIR EYES--THE FLAME OF HONOR IN THEIR HEARTS--THE BLAZE OF GLORY IN THEIR SOULS!

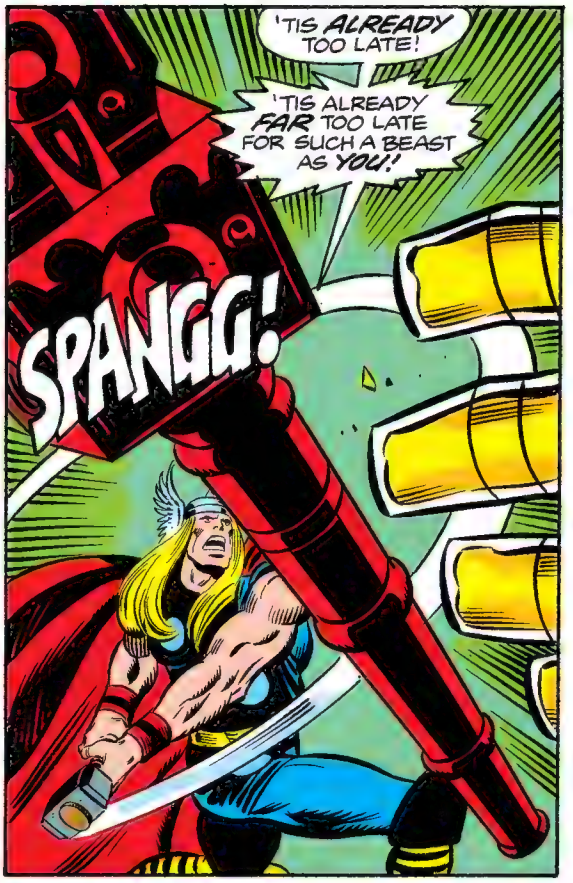
I DID NOT COME HERE TO TRADE SPEECHES, THUNDER GOD... BUT TO GAIN YOUR OATH OF LOYALTY!
SWEAR TO SERVE MY MASTER... OR MY POWER-LANCE WILL BRING YOU PAIN THAT EVEN A GODLING CANNOT LONG ENDURE!
ZZKAK!
NEVER, THOU CHURL! THE PRINCE OF THE REALM ETERNAL WILL EVER SHOW FEALTY TO BUT ONE MASTER--ONE LIEGE--
--AND THOUGH, FOR THE NONCE, MY FATHER DOTH DENY ME--
--STILL SHALL THOR SERVE ONLY THE NOBLE ODIN--
--AYE--E'EN UNTO DEATH!
THOR? DARLING??
HE LIES SO SILENT-- SO STILL!
I JUST CAN'T STAND BY AND WATCH HIM TREATED LIKE THIS! I'VE GOT TO...
NAY, MILADY!
THE THUNDER GOD ALREADY HATH ENOUGH TO CONCERN HIM-- WITHOUT ADDING CONCERN FOR THEE ANEW!
I BESEECH THEE, MILADY--STAY THY HAND--
--AND LEAVE THE BATTLE TO THOSE WHO WERE BRED TO IT!
LET GO OF ME, VOLSTAGG! I WON'T LET YOU STOP ME FROM HELPING MY...


NAY, MY LOVE! VAST VOLSTAGG SPEAKS TRUE!
THOU WOULDST AID ME BEST TO AID ME NOT AT ALL!
DARING HOGUN HATH GAINED ME TIME TO RECOVER MY SENSES--
--AND, IN TRUTH, THAT BE ALL I DOTH REQUIRE!
DARLING, PLEASE--!
MILADY, PRAY LISTEN TO THE NOBLE THOR!
'TWOULD BE FOLLY TO DISPUTE HIS ORDERS NOW--
"--WHEN LIVES HANG IN THE BALANCE!"
ENTITY... NAME: HOGUN... STILL SEEKS TO DESTROY ME...
...BUT ONE WHO SERVES THE MASTER IS NOT EASILY DESTROYED!
BY ODIN! THE ARMORED ONE PLUCKS ME FROM HIS BACK LIKE A LEAF--
--THREATENS TO SNAP ME LIKE A TWIG--!
BUT LIKE THE MIGHTY OAK, FRIEND HOGUN--THOU SHALT STAND!
THOU SHALT STAND!
THRANNGG!
MILORD THOR--!?!

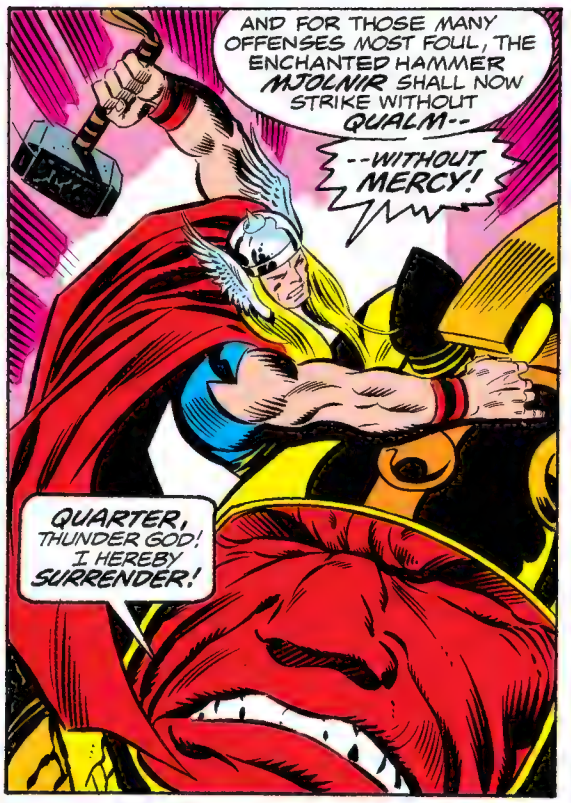
IT DOTH SEEM OUR MINOR DISTRACTION HATH SERVED THE THUNDER GOD WELL, FRIEND FANDRAL!
HE HATH FREED HIS LADY FROM THE GIANT ONE'S CLUTCHES--
--AND FREED FOOLISH HOGUN AS WELL, IT SEEMS!
AYE, GRIM ONE--BUT IN DOING SO, VALIANT THOR HIMSELF HATH FALLEN INTO THE SERVITOR'S GRASP!
WE MUST ACT SWIFTLY, FRIEND HOGUN! THE BEHEMOTH'S FIST TIGHTENS!
WITHIN INSTANTS, IT WILL CRUSH OUR PRINCE TO...
"WAIT! SUDDENLY, THE SERVITOR HAS UNCLENCHED HIS MASSIVE HAND! NOW HE HURLS THE GOD OF THUNDER AWAY FROM HIM!
"BUT WHY?"
SO CLOSE, THOR... I CAME SO CLOSE TO DISOBEYING MY MASTER'S COMMANDS ...AND BURSTING YOU LIKE AN OVER-RIPE FRUIT...
...BUT MY MASTER HAS DEMANDED YOU ALIVE... AND SO SHALL HE HAVE YOU!
THERE ART THOU WRONG, SERVITOR! THY MASTER SHALL "HAVE" ME NOT AT ALL!
NOT WHILE THERE IS BREATH WITHIN MY BODY--OR STRENGTH WITHIN MY LIMBS WITH WHICH TO STRIKE!
THEN LET US STRIKE NOW, MILORD THOR!
FOR ODIN!
FOR ASGARD!

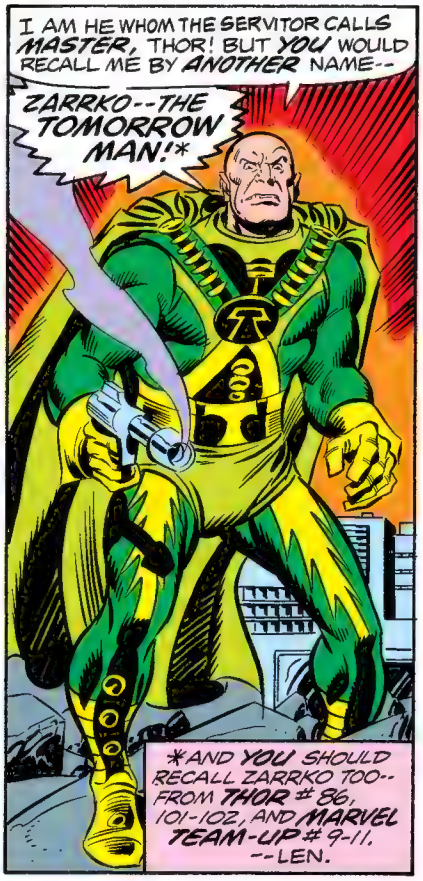
FOR NAUGHT, FOOLS! YOU STRIKE FOR NAUGHT!
SO LONG AS I HOLD MY POWER-LANCE... THE SERVITOR STANDS SUPREME!
ZZKKAK!
THY BOASTS BETRAY THEE, VILLAIN!
"FOR IF THOU DOST STAND UNDEFEATABLE WITH THY FOUL WEAPON IN HAND--
SSKKRAKKTT!
"--THEN THE HAMMER OF THOR SHALL SEE TO IT--
"--THAT THOU DOST STAND NO LONGER!"
WHAT...? THE ASGARDIAN'S ACCURSED MALLET HAS SUNDERED THE VERY EARTH BE-NEATH MY FEET...
KKRROOMM!
...CAN'T MAINTAIN BALANCE...
...FALLING...
WHOOMP!

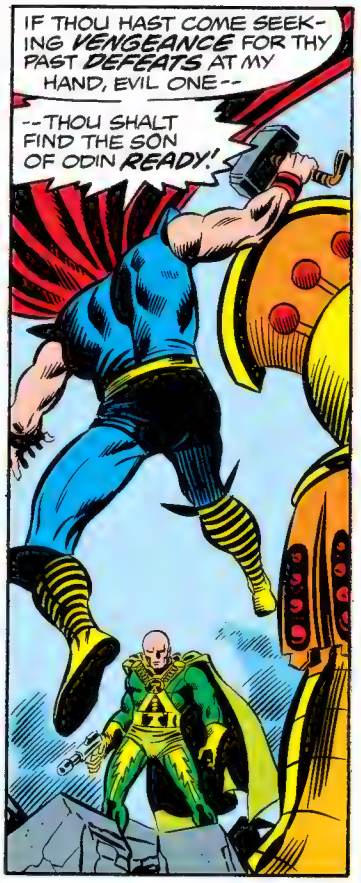

MUST UTILIZE MY POWER-LANCE... BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!
NAY, SERVITOR!


'TIS ALREADY TOO LATE!
'TIS ALREADY FAR TOO LATE FOR SUCH A BEAST AS YOU!
SPANGG!

THOU HAST ATTACKED WITHOUT CAUSE!
THOU HAST THREATENED THE LIFE OF THE WOMAN I LOVE!
THOU HAST ATTEMPTED TO SLAY THOSE COMRADES I HOLD MOST DEAR!


AND FOR THOSE MANY OFFENSES MOST FOUL, THE ENCHANTED HAMMER MJOLNIR SHALL NOW STRIKE WITHOUT QUALM--
--WITHOUT MERCY!
QUARTER, THUNDER GOD! I HEREBY SURRENDER!


I AM HE WHOM THE SERVITOR CALLS MASTER, THOR! BUT YOU WOULD RECALL ME BY ANOTHER NAME--
ZARRKO--THE TOMORROW MAN!*
*AND YOU SHOULD RECALL ZARRKO TOO-- FROM THOR #86, 101-102, AND MARVEL TEAM-UP #9-11. --LEN.



NEXT ISSUE: TURMOIL IN THE TIME-STREAM!

THOR
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JAN
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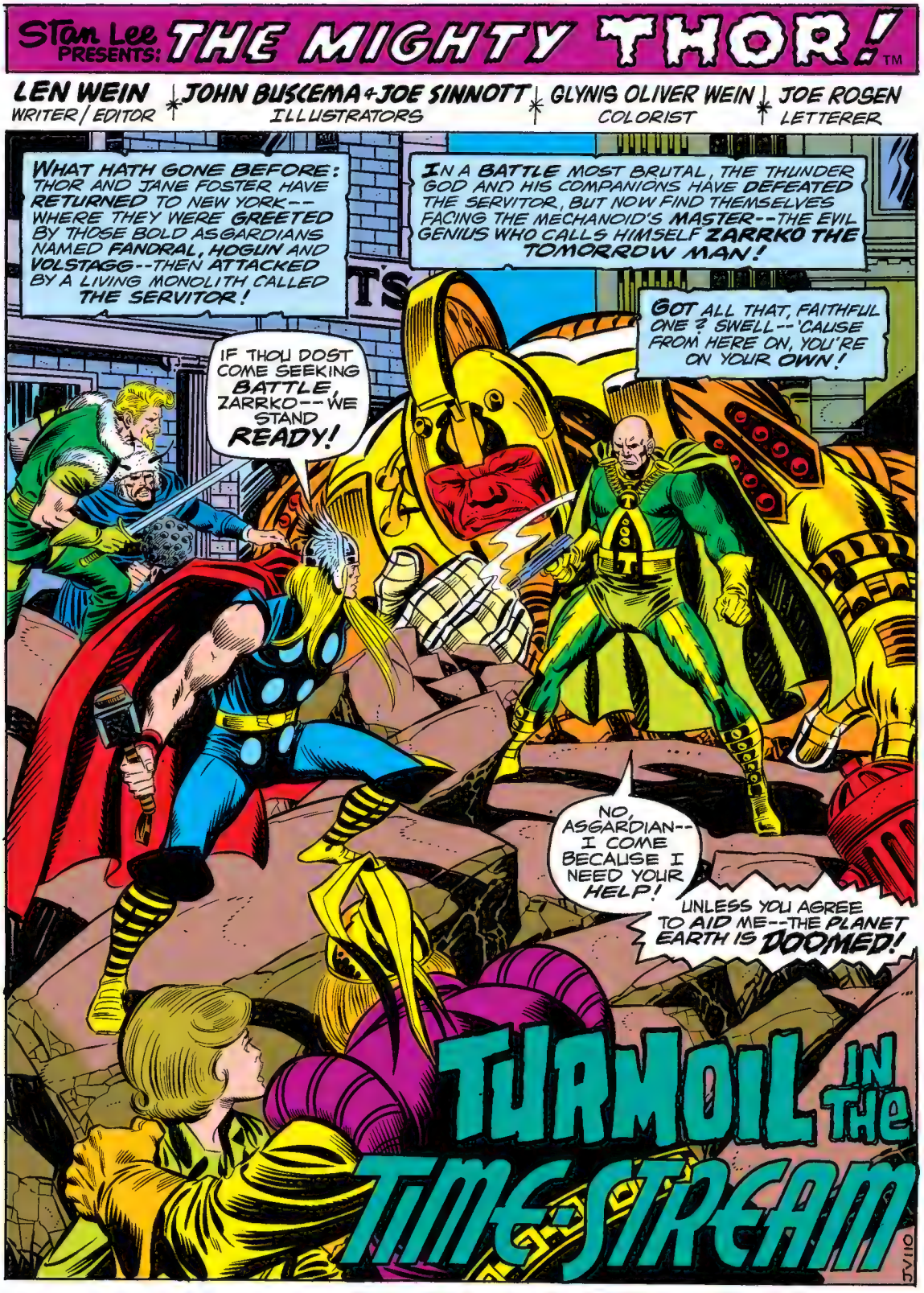
THE MIGHTY
THOR
CAN EVEN THE GOD OF THUNDER STAND AGAINST THE LEGIONS OF TIME GONE MAD!
TURMOIL IN THE TIME-STREAM!


Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR! TM
LEN WEIN WRITER / EDITOR
JOHN BUSCEMA & JOE SINNOTT ILLUSTRATORS
GLYNIS OLIVER WEIN COLORIST
JOE ROSEN LETTERER
WHAT HATH GONE BEFORE: THOR AND JANE FOSTER HAVE RETURNED TO NEW YORK--WHERE THEY WERE GREETED BY THOSE BOLD ASGARDIANS NAMED FANDRAL, HOGUN AND VOLSTAGG--THEN ATTACKED BY A LIVING MONOLITH CALLED THE SERVITOR!
IN A BATTLE MOST BRUTAL, THE THUNDER GOD AND HIS COMPANIONS HAVE DEFEATED THE SERVITOR, BUT NOW FIND THEMSELVES FACING THE MECHANOID'S MASTER--THE EVIL GENIUS WHO CALLS HIMSELF ZARRKO THE TOMORROW MAN!
IF THOU DOST COME SEEKING BATTLE, ZARRKO--WE STAND READY!
GOT ALL THAT, FAITHFUL ONE? SWELL--'CAUSE FROM HERE ON, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN!
NO, ASGARDIAN--I COME BECAUSE I NEED YOUR HELP!
UNLESS YOU AGREE TO AID ME--THE PLANET EARTH IS DOOMED!
TURMOIL IN THE TIME STREAM
JV110

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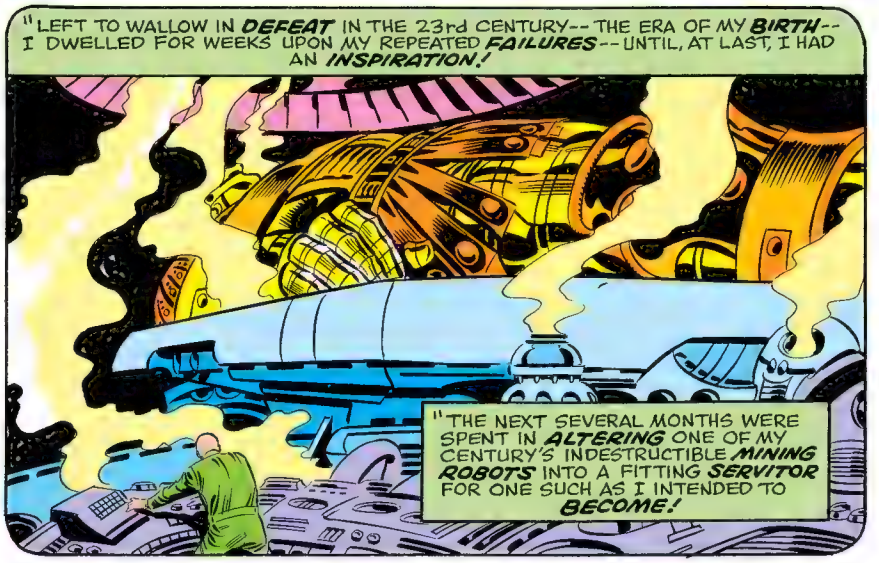
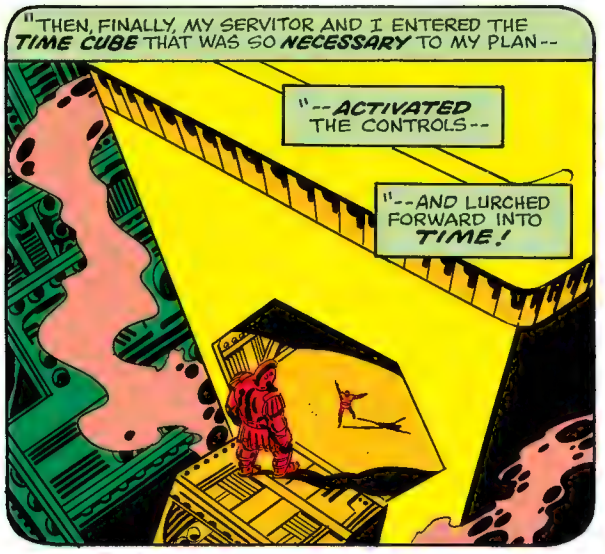
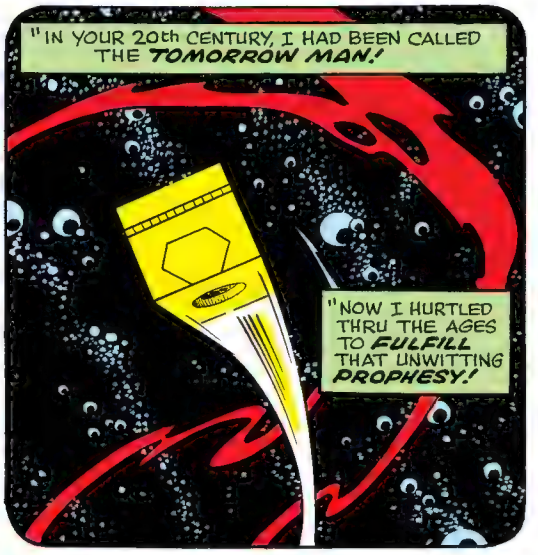
NAY, EVIL ONE! THOU DOST SEEK TO GAIN OUR TRUST-- ONLY SO THOU MAY SLAY US UNSUSPECTING!
IF I WANTED YOU ALL DEAD, ASGARDIAN --MY LASER-GUN WOULD NOT HAVE MISSED MERE MOMENTS AGO!
NOW YOU MUST TRUST ME--OR THE DEATH OF COUNTLESS WORLDS WILL BE ON YOUR HEADS!

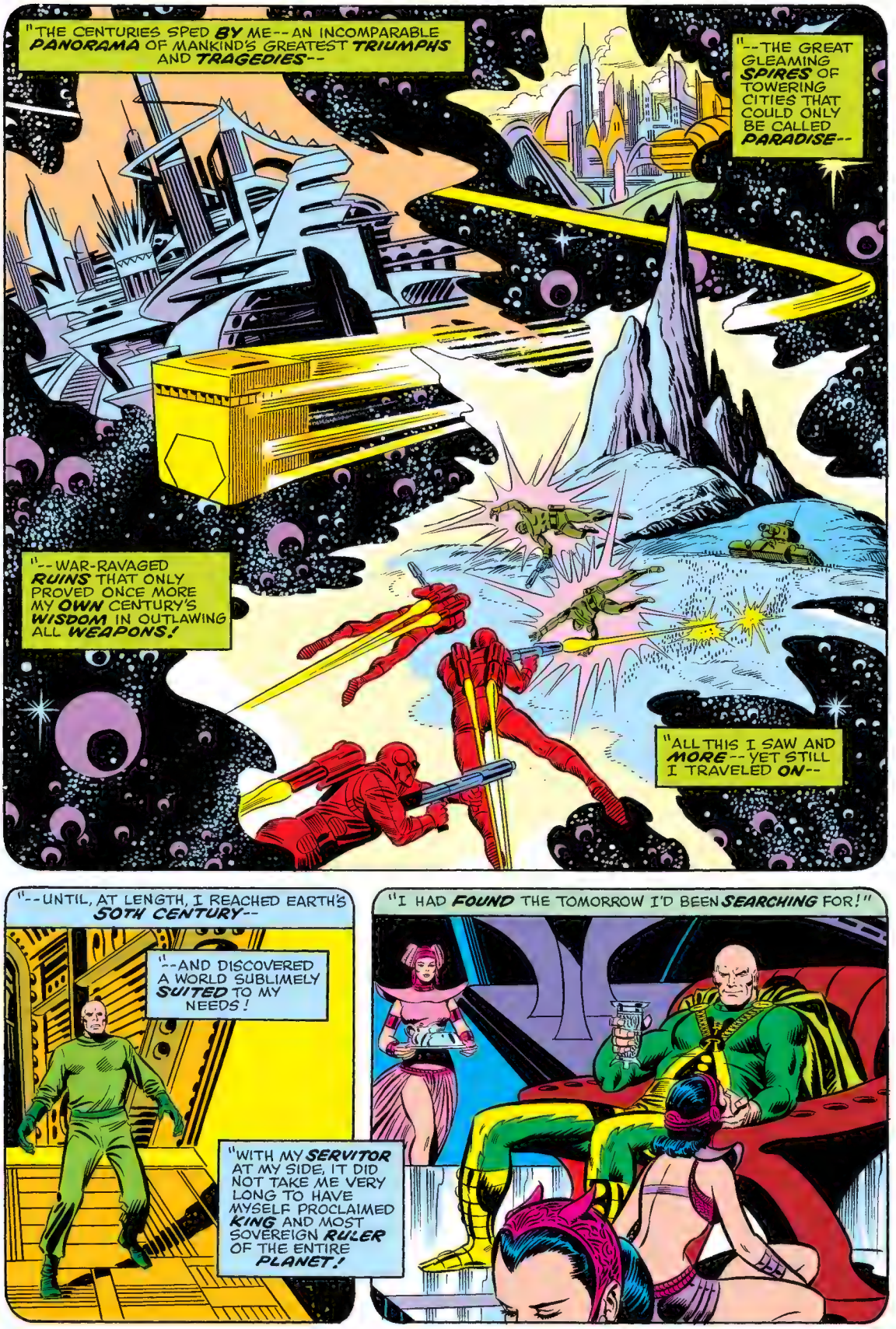
FRIEND FANDRAL, MAYHAP THOU DOST ACT TOO RASHLY! LET US HEAR ZARRKO OUT!
AS THOU WISH, MILORD-- BUT METHINKS THIS TOMORROW MAN DOTH SPEAK WITH THE TONGUE OF A TROLL!

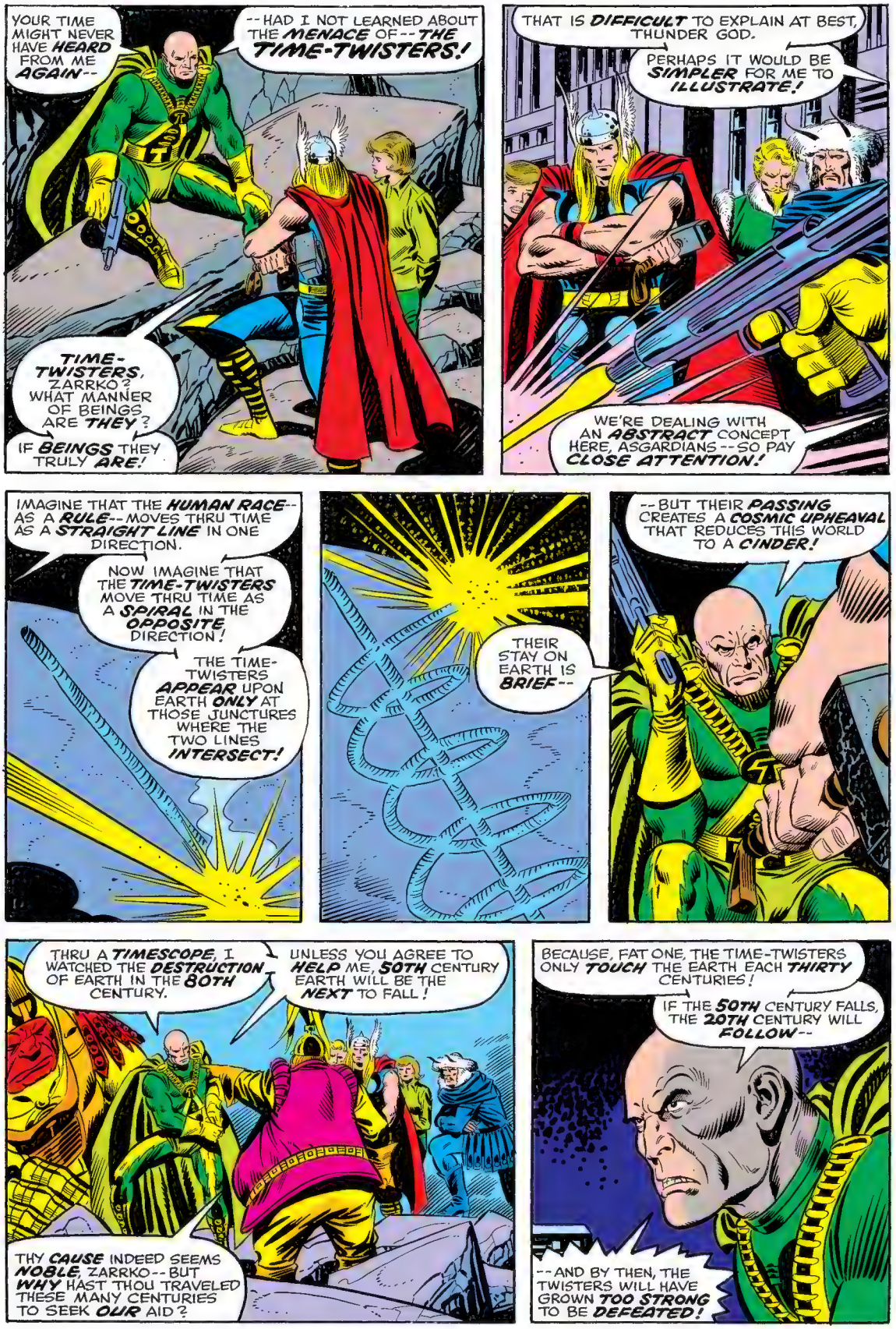
THE THUNDER GOD MIGHT HAVE REASON TO DISTRUST ME, ASGARDIAN-- BUT YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW ME--
--AND EVEN IF YOU DID-- YOU COULD NOT KNOW WHAT TRANSPIRED AFTER THOR AND I LAST CLASHED!*
*BACK IN MARVEL TEAM-UP #11. -- LEN.

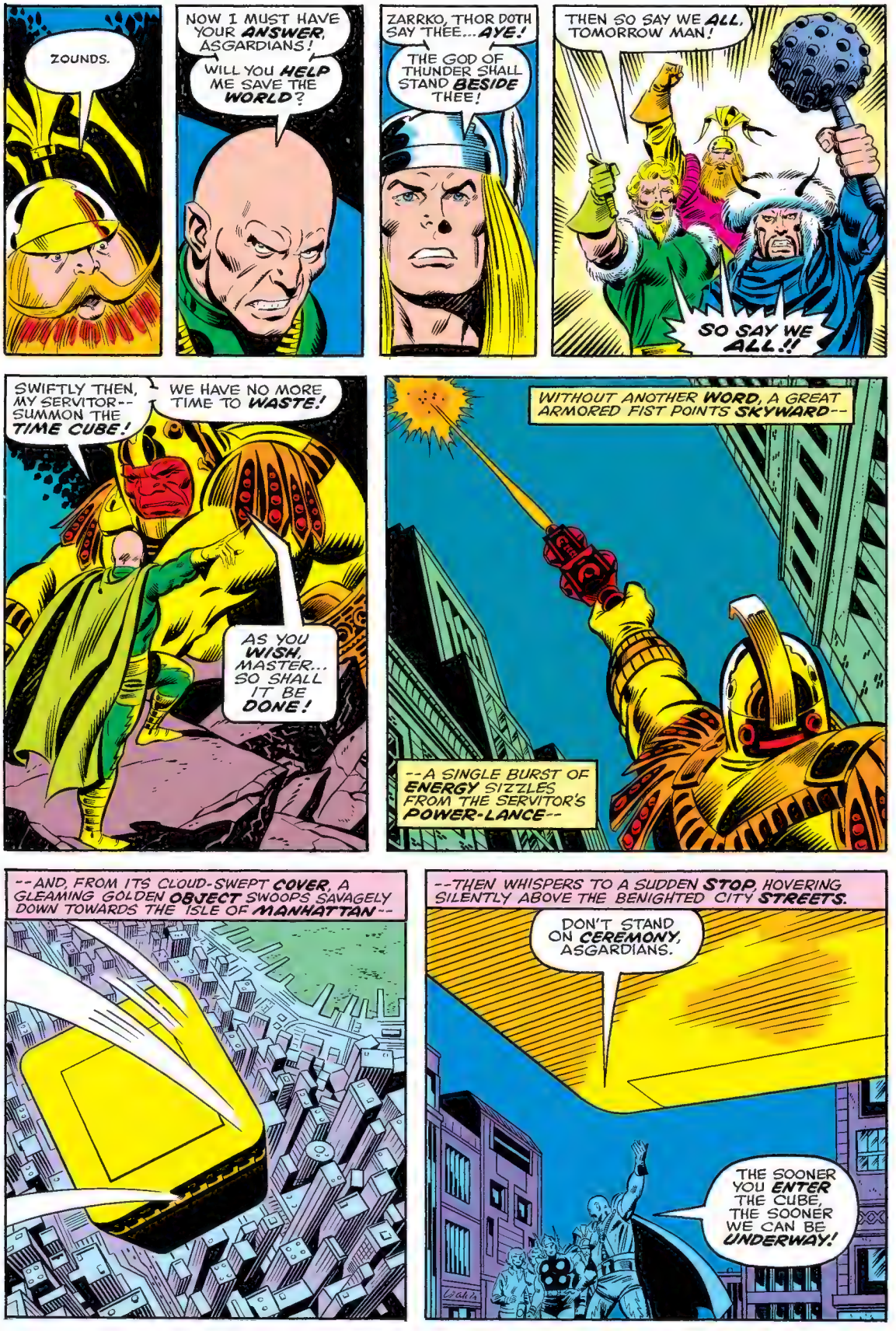

"LEFT TO WALLOW IN DEFEAT IN THE 23rd CENTURY-- THE ERA OF MY BIRTH-- I DWELLED FOR WEEKS UPON MY REPEATED FAILURES-- UNTIL, AT LAST, I HAD AN INSPIRATION!
"THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS WERE SPENT IN ALTERING ONE OF MY CENTURY'S INDESTRUCTIBLE MINING ROBOTS INTO A FITTING SERVITOR FOR ONE SUCH AS I INTENDED TO BECOME!

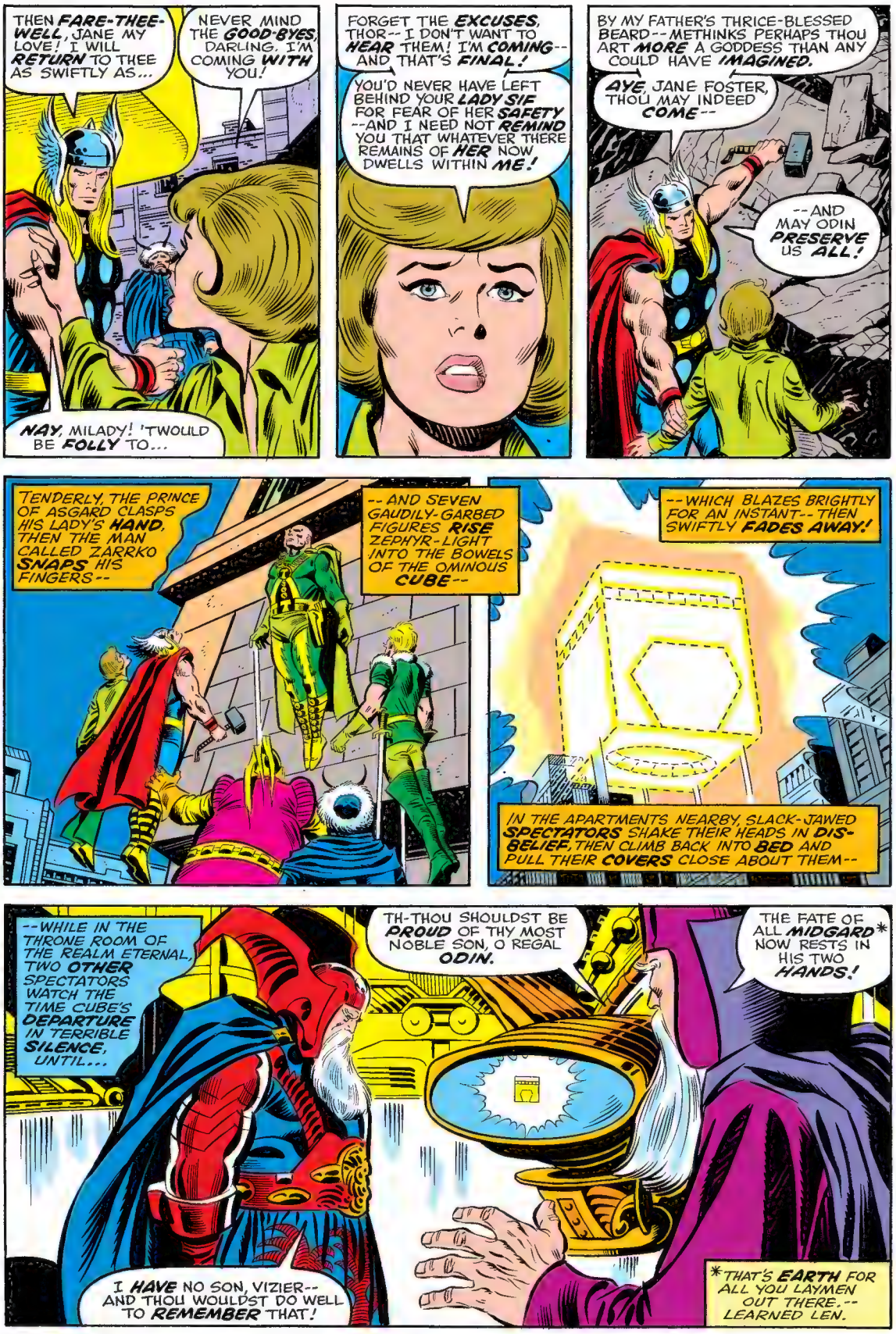

"THEN, FINALLY, MY SERVITOR AND I ENTERED THE TIME CUBE THAT WAS SO NECESSARY TO MY PLAN--
"--ACTIVATED THE CONTROLS--
"--AND LURCHED FORWARD INTO TIME!


"IN YOUR 20th CENTURY, I HAD BEEN CALLED THE TOMORROW MAN!
"NOW I HURTLED THRU THE AGES TO FULFILL THAT UNWITTING PROPHESY!

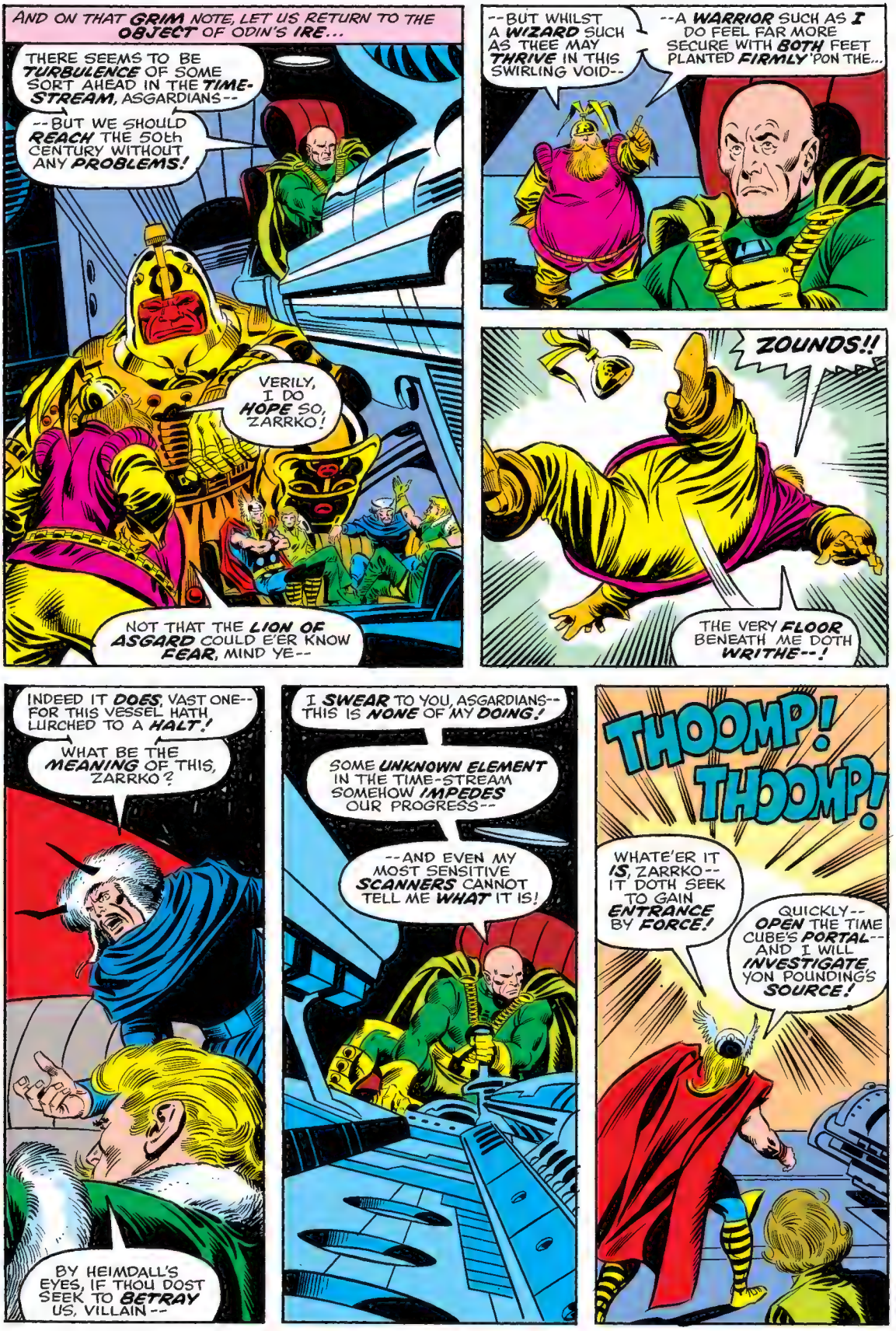

"THE CENTURIES SPED BY ME--AN INCOMPARABLE PANORAMA OF MANKIND'S GREATEST TRIUMPHS AND TRAGEDIES--
"--THE GREAT GLEAMING SPIRES OF TOWERING CITIES THAT COULD ONLY BE CALLED PARADISE--
"--WAR-RAVAGED RUINS THAT ONLY PROVED ONCE MORE MY OWN CENTURY'S WISDOM IN OUTLAWING ALL WEAPONS!
"ALL THIS I SAW AND MORE--YET STILL I TRAVELED ON--
"--UNTIL, AT LENGTH, I REACHED EARTH'S 50TH CENTURY--
"--AND DISCOVERED A WORLD SUBLIMELY SUITED TO MY NEEDS!
"WITH MY SERVITOR AT MY SIDE, IT DID NOT TAKE ME VERY LONG TO HAVE MYSELF PROCLAIMED KING AND MOST SOVEREIGN RULER OF THE ENTIRE PLANET!
"I HAD FOUND THE TOMORROW I'D BEEN SEARCHING FOR!"


YOUR TIME MIGHT NEVER HAVE HEARD FROM ME AGAIN--
--HAD I NOT LEARNED ABOUT THE MENACE OF--THE TIME-TWISTERS!
TIME-TWISTERS, ZARRKO? WHAT MANNER OF BEINGS ARE THEY?
IF BEINGS THEY TRULY ARE!
THAT IS DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN AT BEST, THUNDER GOD.
PERHAPS IT WOULD BE SIMPLER FOR ME TO ILLUSTRATE!
WE'RE DEALING WITH AN ABSTRACT CONCEPT HERE, ASGARDIANS--SO PAY CLOSE ATTENTION!
IMAGINE THAT THE HUMAN RACE--AS A RULE--MOVES THRU TIME AS A STRAIGHT LINE IN ONE DIRECTION.
NOW IMAGINE THAT THE TIME-TWISTERS MOVE THRU TIME AS A SPIRAL IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION!
THE TIME-TWISTERS APPEAR UPON EARTH ONLY AT THOSE JUNCTURES WHERE THE TWO LINES INTERSECT!
THEIR STAY ON EARTH IS BRIEF--
--BUT THEIR PASSING CREATES A COSMIC UPHEAVAL THAT REDUCES THIS WORLD TO A CINDER!
THRU A TIMESCOPE, I WATCHED THE DESTRUCTION OF EARTH IN THE 80TH CENTURY.
UNLESS YOU AGREE TO HELP ME, 50TH CENTURY EARTH WILL BE THE NEXT TO FALL!
THY CAUSE INDEED SEEMS NOBLE, ZARRKO--BUT WHY HAST THOU TRAVELED THESE MANY CENTURIES TO SEEK OUR AID?
BECAUSE, FAT ONE, THE TIME-TWISTERS ONLY TOUCH THE EARTH EACH THIRTY CENTURIES!
IF THE 50TH CENTURY FALLS, THE 20TH CENTURY WILL FOLLOW--
--AND BY THEN, THE TWISTERS WILL HAVE GROWN TOO STRONG TO BE DEFEATED!


ZOUNDS.
NOW I MUST HAVE YOUR ANSWER, ASGARDIANS!
WILL YOU HELP ME SAVE THE WORLD?
ZARRKO, THOR DOTH SAY THEE... AYE!
THE GOD OF THUNDER SHALL STAND BESIDE THEE!
THEN SO SAY WE ALL, TOMORROW MAN!
SO SAY WE ALL!!
SWIFTLY THEN, MY SERVITOR-- SUMMON THE TIME CUBE!
WE HAVE NO MORE TIME TO WASTE!
AS YOU WISH, MASTER... SO SHALL IT BE DONE!
WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, A GREAT ARMORED FIST POINTS SKYWARD--
--A SINGLE BURST OF ENERGY SIZZLES FROM THE SERVITOR'S POWER-LANCE--
--AND, FROM ITS CLOUD-SWEPT COVER, A GLEAMING GOLDEN OBJECT SWOOPS SAVAGELY DOWN TOWARDS THE ISLE OF MANHATTAN--
--THEN WHISPERS TO A SUDDEN STOP, HOVERING SILENTLY ABOVE THE BENIGHTED CITY STREETS.
DON'T STAND ON CEREMONY, ASGARDIANS.
THE SOONER YOU ENTER THE CUBE, THE SOONER WE CAN BE UNDERWAY!

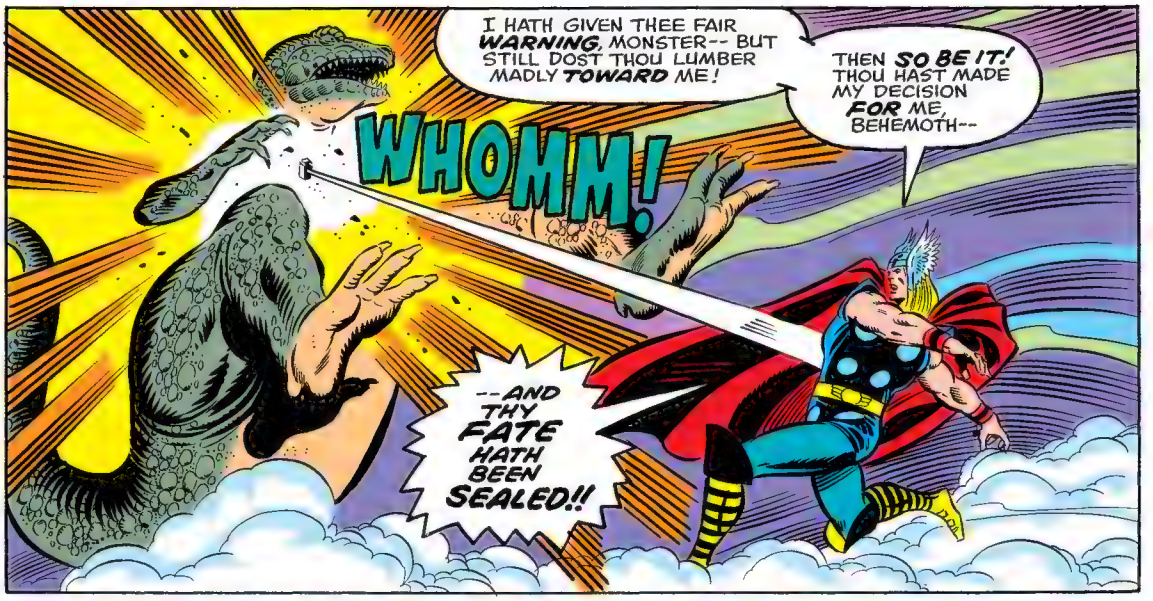

THEN FARE-THEE-WELL, JANE MY LOVE! I WILL RETURN TO THEE AS SWIFTLY AS...
NEVER MIND THE GOOD-BYES, DARLING. I'M COMING WITH YOU!
NAY, MILADY! 'TWOULD BE FOLLY TO...
FORGET THE EXCUSES, THOR-- I DON'T WANT TO HEAR THEM! I'M COMING-- AND THAT'S FINAL!
YOU'D NEVER HAVE LEFT BEHIND YOUR LADY SIF FOR FEAR OF HER SAFETY --AND I NEED NOT REMIND YOU THAT WHATEVER THERE REMAINS OF HER NOW DWELLS WITHIN ME!
BY MY FATHER'S THRICE-BLESSED BEARD-- METHINKS PERHAPS THOU ART MORE A GODDESS THAN ANY COULD HAVE IMAGINED.
AYE, JANE FOSTER, THOU MAY INDEED COME--
--AND MAY ODIN PRESERVE US ALL!
TENDERLY, THE PRINCE OF ASGARD CLASPS HIS LADY'S HAND, THEN THE MAN CALLED ZARRKO SNAPS HIS FINGERS--
-- AND SEVEN GAUDILY-GARBED FIGURES RISE ZEPHYR-LIGHT INTO THE BOWELS OF THE OMINOUS CUBE--
--WHICH BLAZES BRIGHTLY FOR AN INSTANT-- THEN SWIFTLY FADES AWAY!
IN THE APARTMENTS NEARBY, SLACK-JAWED SPECTATORS SHAKE THEIR HEADS IN DIS-BELIEF, THEN CLIMB BACK INTO BED AND PULL THEIR COVERS CLOSE ABOUT THEM--
--WHILE IN THE THRONE ROOM OF THE REALM ETERNAL, TWO OTHER SPECTATORS WATCH THE TIME CUBE'S DEPARTURE IN TERRIBLE SILENCE, UNTIL...
TH-THOU SHOULDST BE PROUD OF THY MOST NOBLE SON, O REGAL ODIN.
THE FATE OF ALL MIDGARD* NOW RESTS IN HIS TWO HANDS!
I HAVE NO SON, VIZIER-- AND THOU WOULDST DO WELL TO REMEMBER THAT!
*THAT'S EARTH FOR ALL YOU LAYMEN OUT THERE,-- LEARNED LEN.

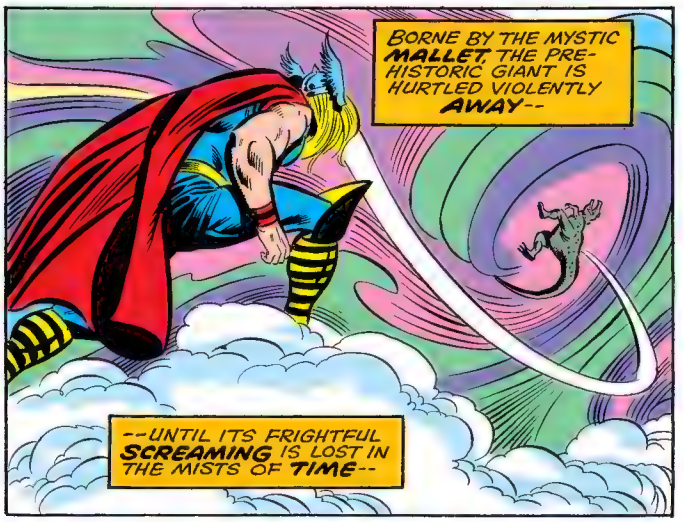
SO LONG AS THOR DOTH DEIGN TO KEEP COMPANY WITH THE MORTAL JANE FOSTER AGAINST MY WISHES--
SO LONG AS HE DOTH DEFY MY ROYAL COMMAND--
FOR SO LONG SHALL THE GOD OF THUNDER BE NOT MINE HEIR!
BUT, MY LIEGE...
DOTH NOT THE FACT THAT THE SPIRIT OF THE GODDESS SIF NOW POSSESSES THE MORTAL MAID'S BODY SOFTEN THY RESOLVE IN THE LEAST?
NAY, VIZIER--'TIS THE PRINCIPLE OF THE THING THAT DOTH SIT SO ILL WITH ME!
THOR WAS GIVEN A COMMAND MOST PLAIN--YET, OF HIS OWN ACCORD, THE THUNDER GOD CHOSE TO IGNORE IT!
SUCH TEMERITY MUST NOT GO UNPUNISHED!
SO THOU HAST BANISHED THINE OWN FLESH-AND-BLOOD FROM THE REALM ETERNAL UNTIL SUCH TIME AS HE SUBMITS TO THY WILL!
MILORD, THOUGH THOU DOST BE THE WISEST OF THE WISE--STILL, AS THY MOST HUMBLE ADVISOR METHINKS PERHAPS THOU ART MAKING A MISTAKE!
NAY, VIZIER! I ASSURE THEE--
--I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I AM DOING!


AND ON THAT GRIM NOTE, LET US RETURN TO THE OBJECT OF ODIN'S IRE...
THERE SEEMS TO BE TURBULENCE OF SOME SORT AHEAD IN THE TIME-STREAM, ASGARDIANS--
--BUT WE SHOULD REACH THE 50th CENTURY WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS!
VERILY, I DO HOPE SO, ZARRKO!
NOT THAT THE LION OF ASGARD COULD E'ER KNOW FEAR, MIND YE--
--BUT WHILST A WIZARD SUCH AS THEE MAY THRIVE IN THIS SWIRLING VOID--
--A WARRIOR SUCH AS I DO FEEL FAR MORE SECURE WITH BOTH FEET PLANTED FIRMLY 'PON THE...
ZOUNDS!!
THE VERY FLOOR BENEATH ME DOTH WRITHE--!
INDEED IT DOES, VAST ONE-- FOR THIS VESSEL HATH LURCHED TO A HALT!
WHAT BE THE MEANING OF THIS, ZARRKO?
BY HEIMDALL'S EYES, IF THOU DOST SEEK TO BETRAY US, VILLAIN--
I SWEAR TO YOU, ASGARDIANS-- THIS IS NONE OF MY DOING!
SOME UNKNOWN ELEMENT IN THE TIME-STREAM SOMEHOW IMPEDES OUR PROGRESS--
--AND EVEN MY MOST SENSITIVE SCANNERS CANNOT TELL ME WHAT IT IS!
THOOMP! THOOMP!
WHATE'ER IT IS, ZARRKO-- IT DOTH SEEK TO GAIN ENTRANCE BY FORCE!
QUICKLY-- OPEN THE TIME CUBE'S PORTAL-- AND I WILL INVESTIGATE YON POUNDING'S SOURCE!

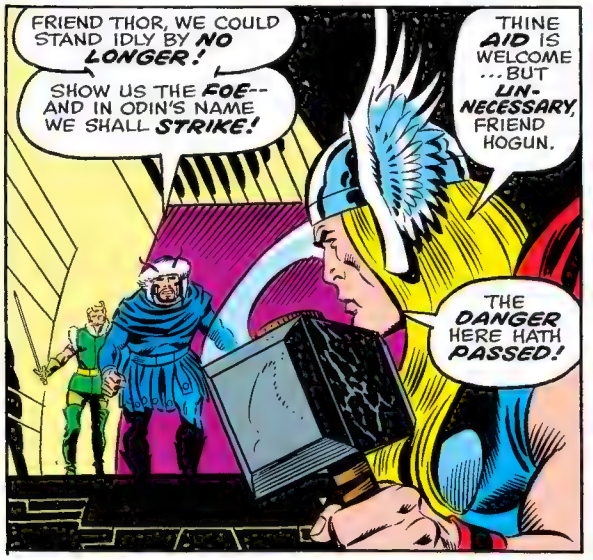
MYSTIC MJOLNIR CLENCHED TIGHTLY IN HIS FIST, THE GOD OF THUNDER STEPS BOLDLY FROM THE TIME-TOSSED CUBE--
--INTO A WORLD THAT IS REALLY NOT A WORLD AT ALL, BUT A BILLOWING MIASMA OF STIFLING MISTS THAT SWIRL IN FROM OBLIVION AND SWIRL AWAY INTO DESPAIR.
CAUTIOUSLY, THE ODINSON STRIDES THRU THE SMOTHERING FOG, UNSURE OF EXACTLY WHAT TO EXPECT--
--BUT NEVER EXPECTING-- THIS!!
FAFNIR'S BLOOD! OUR VESSEL HATH BEEN ASSAULTED BY-- A DRAGON!
IN POINT OF FACT, IT'S A DINOSAUR--
SPECIFICALLY, TYRANNOSAURUS REX--
--THE THUNDER LIZARD--
--BUT THAT LITTLE BIT OF IRONY IS SOMEHOW LOST ON THE EMBATTLED ASGARDIAN!
RELEASE MINE ARM, BEHEMOTH!
RELEASE ME, I SAY--
--OR KNOW THE WRATH OF THOR!!
THRAMM!

FOR AN INSTANT, THE SLICK-SCALED MONSTROSITY TREMBLES FROM THE FORCE OF THE THUNDER GOD'S BLOW--
--THEN, BELLOWING ITS RAGE, IT FALLS--
THOOM!
--BUT ITS FURY DOES NOT DIMINISH!
SO, BEHEMOTH--STILL DOST THOU SEEK TO DEVOUR ME--
--BUT MINE HAMMER'S NEXT BLOW SHALL SHUT THINE GAPING MAW!
UNFORTUNATELY, THE BATTLE'S NEXT BLOW IS NOT STRUCK BY THE GOD OF THUNDER!
VERILY, THOU ART AS FEARSOME AS THY LEGENDS HATH CLAIMED THEE, MONSTER--
--BUT THERE ARE LEGENDS TOLD AS WELL OF THE SCION OF ODIN!
I HATH NO REAL WISH TO SLAY THEE, MONSTER--THOU ART ALMOST NOBLE IN THY FASHION--
--BUT IF THOU DOST SEEK TO ATTACK ME ANEW, THOU SHALT LEAVE ME NO CHOICE!
FOR THINE OWN SAKE, TURN THEE BACK, BEHEMOTH! I BESEECH THEE--
TURN THEE BACK--OR PERISH!

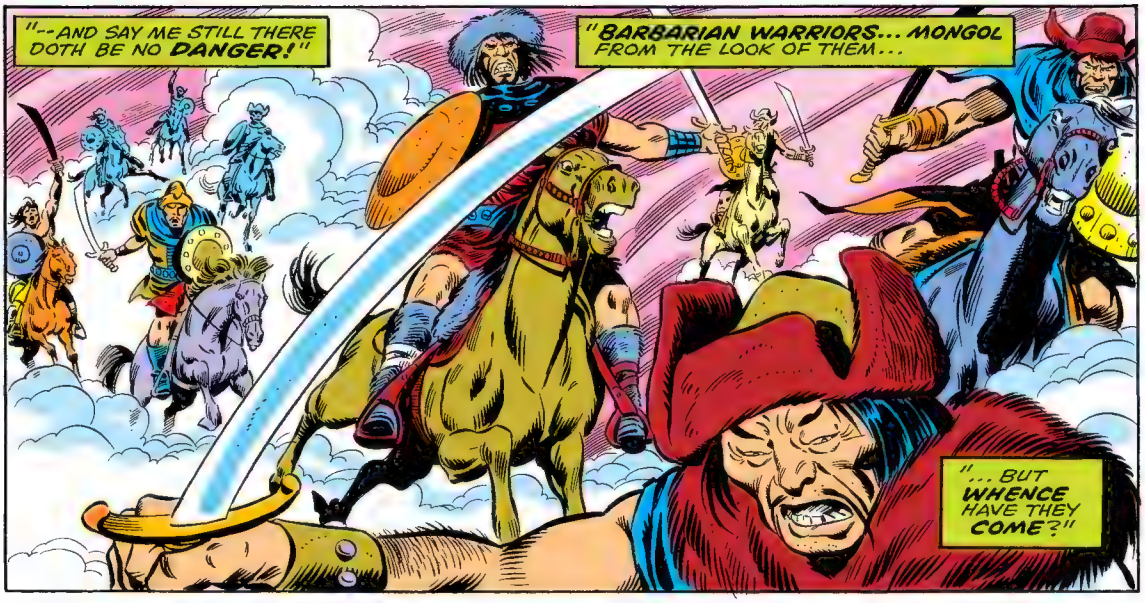

I HATH GIVEN THEE FAIR WARNING, MONSTER-- BUT STILL DOST THOU LUMBER MADLY TOWARD ME!
THEN SO BE IT! THOU HAST MADE MY DECISION FOR ME, BEHEMOTH--
WHOMM!
--AND THY FATE HATH BEEN SEALED!!


BORNE BY THE MYSTIC MALLET, THE PRE-HISTORIC GIANT IS HURTLED VIOLENTLY AWAY--
--UNTIL ITS FRIGHTFUL SCREAMING IS LOST IN THE MISTS OF TIME--

--AND ENCHANTED MJOLNIR RETURNS TO ITS MASTER--
--ALONE!

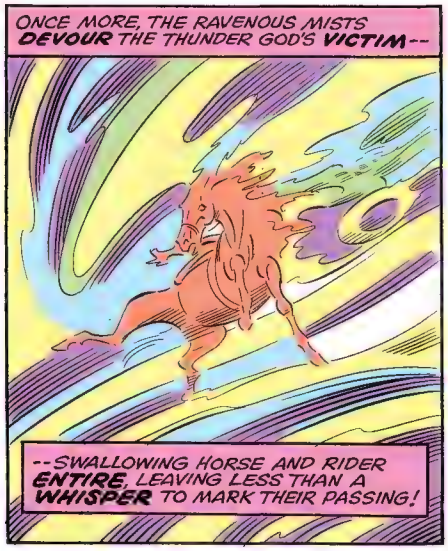

FRIEND THOR, WE COULD STAND IDLY BY NO LONGER!
SHOW US THE FOE-- AND IN ODIN'S NAME WE SHALL STRIKE!
THINE AID IS WELCOME ...BUT UN-NECESSARY, FRIEND HOGUN.
THE DANGER HERE HATH PASSED!

HAS IT, THOR?
THEN LOOK THEE TO YONDER MISTS, MILORD--


"--AND SAY ME STILL THERE DOTH BE NO DANGER!"
"BARBARIAN WARRIORS... MONGOL FROM THE LOOK OF THEM...
"... BUT WHENCE HAVE THEY COME?"

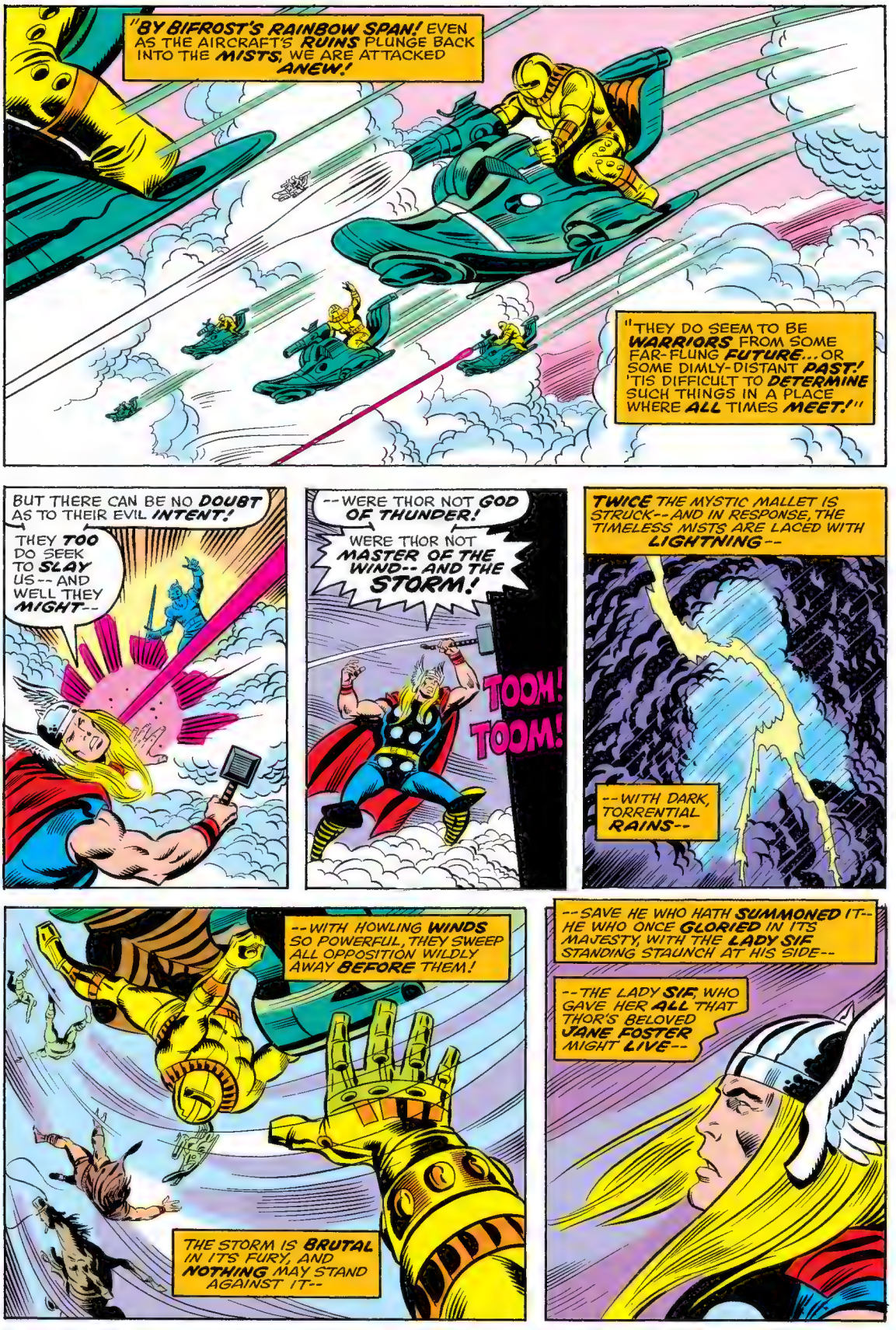
'TIS A QUESTION, FRIEND FANDRAL, TO BE ANSWERED IN DUE COURSE--
--AFTER THE BATTLE IS WON!
TO ARMS, MY BROTHERS --AND TO COMBAT!

WE DID NOT BEGIN THIS CONFLICT--
-- BUT, VERILY, WE SHALL END IT!
CROOM!

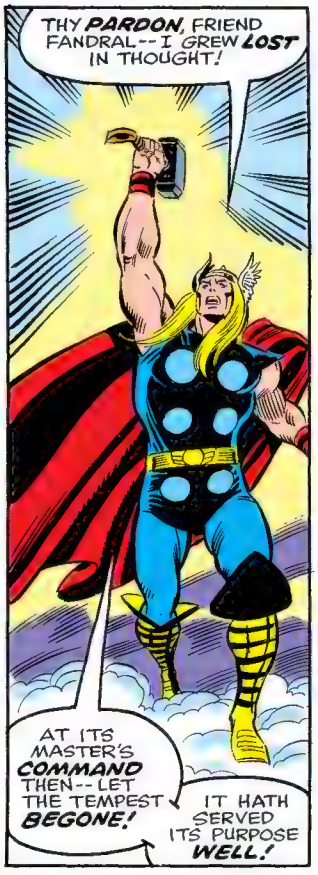

ONCE MORE, THE RAVENOUS MISTS DEVOUR THE THUNDER GOD'S VICTIM--
--SWALLOWING HORSE AND RIDER ENTIRE, LEAVING LESS THAN A WHISPER TO MARK THEIR PASSING!

HAVE A CARE, MY COMRADES--LEST THESE HUNGRY MISTS CONSUME YE TOO!
HAVE A CARE-- BUT STRIKE!
FOR ODIN!
FOR ASGARD!!

NO, ASGARDIAN... FOR MY MASTER...
...AND FOR THE FUTURE OF HIS WORLD!
BY THY FATHER'S BEARD, FRIEND THOR--HOW CAN VALIANT VOLSTAGG NOBLY DEFEND THE REAR IF THOU PERSIST IN DRIVING OUR ENEMIES TO ME?
AS EVER, VAST ONE, THY COURAGE KNOWS NO END!
BROK
BACK, THOU CHURLS!!
IN TRUTH, MILORD--METHINKS 'TWOULD BE NIGH IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND SUCH VALOR'S BEGINNING! 'TWOULD REQUIRE A...
BY ASGARD! THAT SOUND... LIKE THE GROWL OF SOME BEAST...
"...OR THE ROAR OF AN ATTACKING PLANE!"
RRH UD-UD-UD UD-AH
YON AIRCRAFT DOTH SEEK TO DESTROY US, BROTHERS!
BUT MERE MACHINE-GUN BULLETS ARE AS NOTHING--
"--WHEN COMPARED TO THE HAMMER OF THOR!
THRO M!

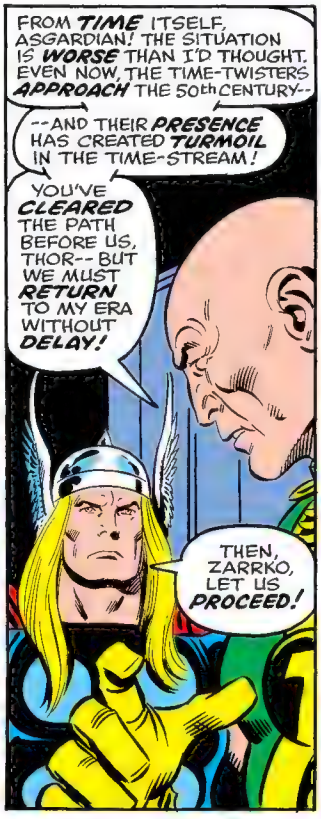

"BY BIFROST'S RAINBOW SPAN! EVEN AS THE AIRCRAFT'S RUINS PLUNGE BACK INTO THE MISTS, WE ARE ATTACKED ANEW!
"THEY DO SEEM TO BE WARRIORS FROM SOME FAR-FLUNG FUTURE...OR SOME DIMLY-DISTANT PAST! 'TIS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE SUCH THINGS IN A PLACE WHERE ALL TIMES MEET!"
BUT THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT AS TO THEIR EVIL INTENT!
THEY TOO DO SEEK TO SLAY US-- AND WELL THEY MIGHT--
--WERE THOR NOT GOD OF THUNDER!
WERE THOR NOT MASTER OF THE WIND-- AND THE STORM!
TOOM! TOOM!
TWICE THE MYSTIC MALLET IS STRUCK-- AND IN RESPONSE, THE TIMELESS MISTS ARE LACED WITH LIGHTNING--
--WITH DARK, TORRENTIAL RAINS--
--WITH HOWLING WINDS SO POWERFUL, THEY SWEEP ALL OPPOSITION WILDLY AWAY BEFORE THEM!
THE STORM IS BRUTAL IN ITS FURY, AND NOTHING MAY STAND AGAINST IT--
--SAVE HE WHO HATH SUMMONED IT-- HE WHO ONCE GLORIED IN ITS MAJESTY, WITH THE LADY SIF STANDING STAUNCH AT HIS SIDE--
--THE LADY SIF, WHO GAVE HER ALL THAT THOR'S BELOVED JANE FOSTER MIGHT LIVE--

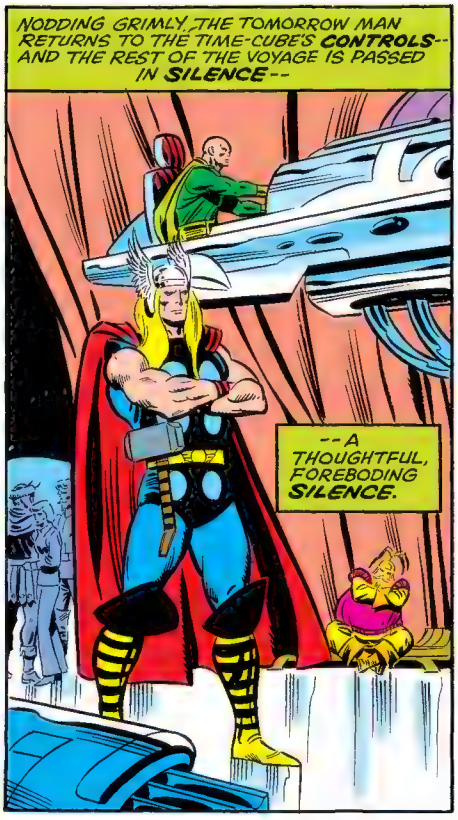
--THAT THE THUNDER GOD MIGHT BE REUNITED ONCE MORE WITH THE ONE HE...
MILORD THOR, I PRITHEE-- CEASE THY HAMMER-WROUGHT STORM--
--LEST IT DOTH CARRY OFF THOSE IT WAS SUMMONED TO SAVE!

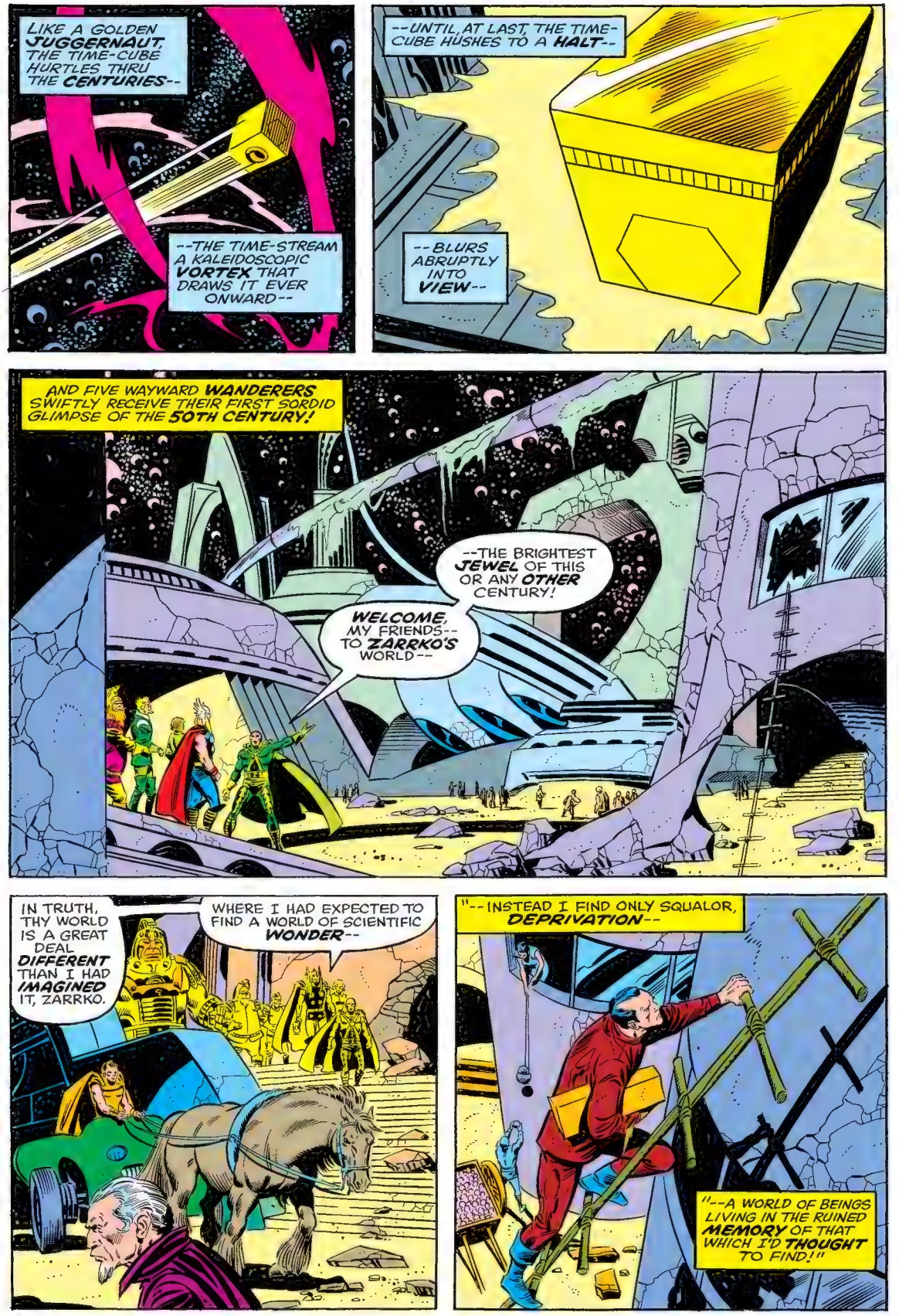

THY PARDON, FRIEND FANDRAL-- I GREW LOST IN THOUGHT!
AT ITS MASTER'S COMMAND THEN-- LET THE TEMPEST BEGONE!
IT HATH SERVED ITS PURPOSE WELL!

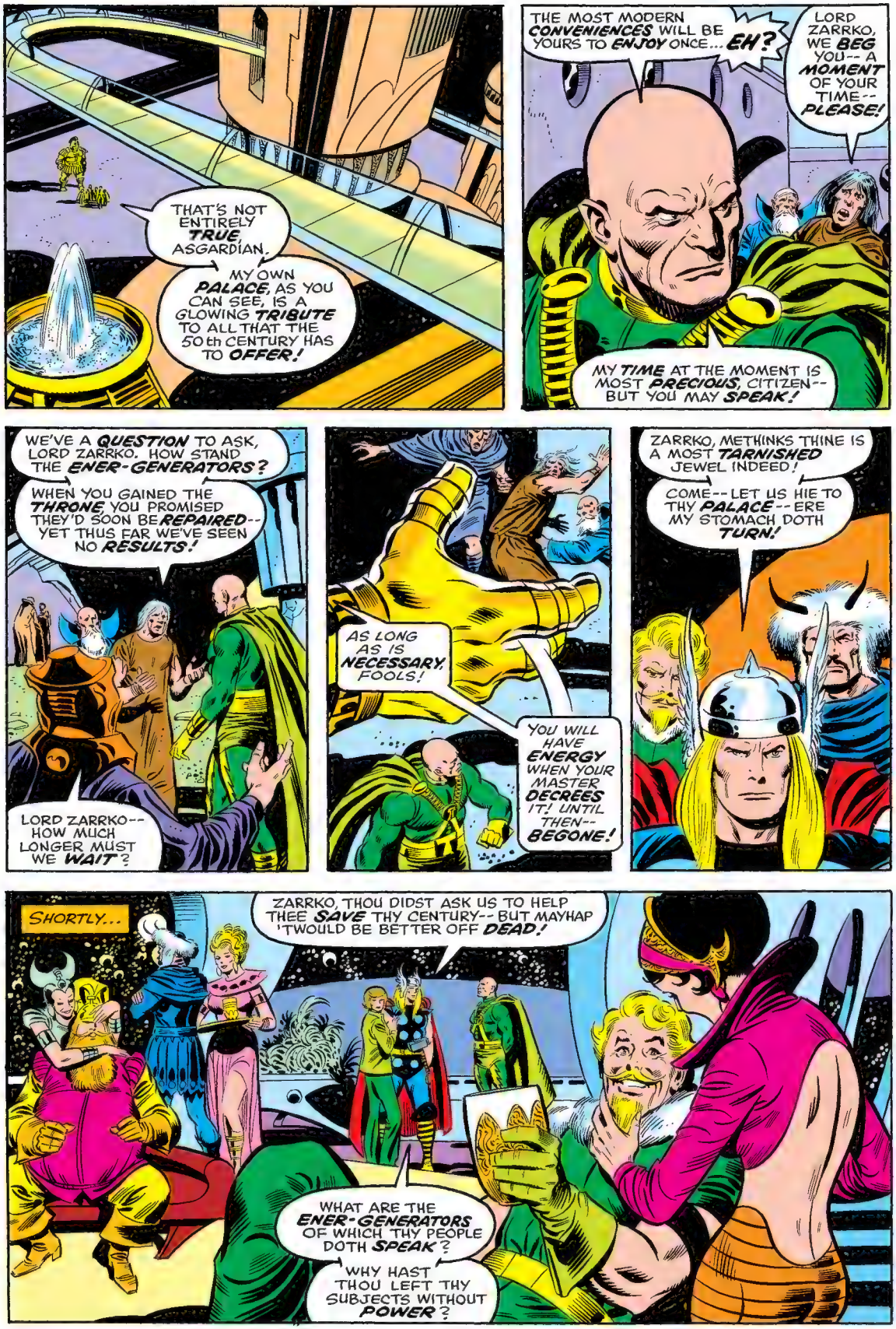
YOUR TALENTS ARE MOST IMPRESSIVE, ASGARDIAN! MY MASTER WAS WISE TO ENLIST YOU IN HIS SERVICE!
AS HE WAS WHEN HE CHOSE THEE, SERVITOR. THOU ART INDEED A MOST ABLE COMRADE-IN-ARMS!
I COULD BE NO LESS, THUNDER GOD... FOR AS SUCH WAS I DESIGNED!
COME, GIANT ONE-- LET US RETURN TO THE TIME-CUBE! THE BATTLE HERE BE DONE!

CONGRATULATIONS, THOR. I WITNESSED YOUR VICTORY ON MY VIEWSCREEN-- A CONFLICT NOBLY WON!
WE SEEK NOT FLATTERY, ZARRKO-- BUT ANSWERS!
WHENCE CAME THE FOES WE DEFEATED IN YON MISTS?

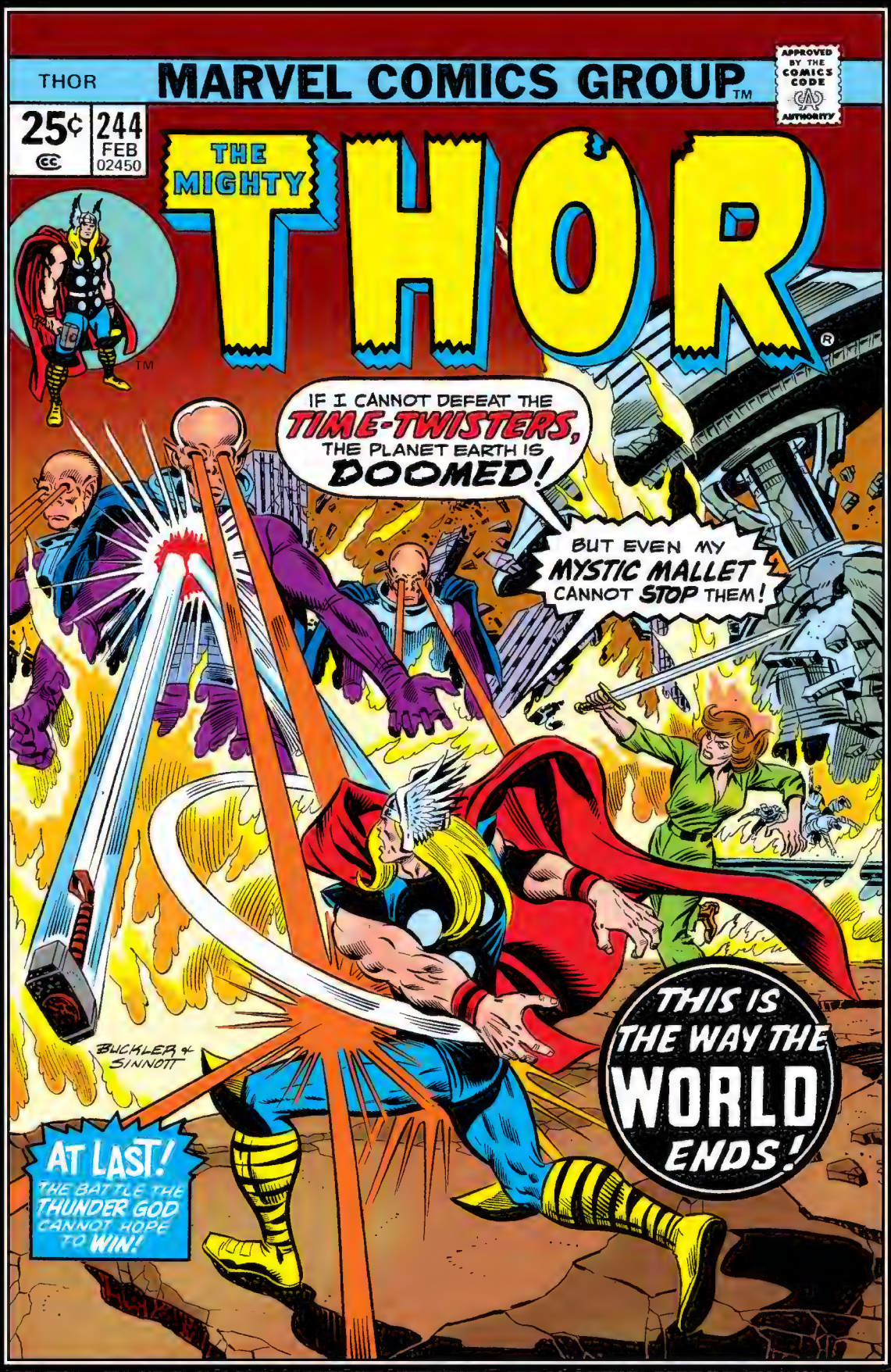

FROM TIME ITSELF, ASGARDIAN! THE SITUATION IS WORSE THAN I'D THOUGHT. EVEN NOW, THE TIME-TWISTERS APPROACH THE 50th CENTURY--
--AND THEIR PRESENCE HAS CREATED TURMOIL IN THE TIME-STREAM!
YOU'VE CLEARED THE PATH BEFORE US, THOR-- BUT WE MUST RETURN TO MY ERA WITHOUT DELAY!
THEN, ZARRKO, LET US PROCEED!


NODDING GRIMLY, THE TOMORROW MAN RETURNS TO THE TIME-CUBE'S CONTROLS-- AND THE REST OF THE VOYAGE IS PASSED IN SILENCE--
--A THOUGHTFUL, FOREBODING SILENCE.


LIKE A GOLDEN JUGGERNAUT, THE TIME-CUBE HURTLES THRU THE CENTURIES--
--THE TIME-STREAM A KALEIDOSCOPIC VORTEX THAT DRAWS IT EVER ONWARD--
--UNTIL, AT LAST, THE TIME-CUBE HUSHES TO A HALT--
--BLURS ABRUPTLY INTO VIEW--
AND FIVE WAYWARD WANDERERS SWIFTLY RECEIVE THEIR FIRST SORDID GLIMPSE OF THE 50TH CENTURY!
WELCOME, MY FRIENDS-- TO ZARRKO'S WORLD--
--THE BRIGHTEST JEWEL OF THIS OR ANY OTHER CENTURY!
IN TRUTH, THY WORLD IS A GREAT DEAL DIFFERENT THAN I HAD IMAGINED IT, ZARRKO.
WHERE I HAD EXPECTED TO FIND A WORLD OF SCIENTIFIC WONDER--
"--INSTEAD I FIND ONLY SQUALOR, DEPRIVATION--
"--A WORLD OF BEINGS LIVING IN THE RUINED MEMORY OF THAT WHICH I'D THOUGHT TO FIND!"


THAT'S NOT ENTIRELY TRUE, ASGARDIAN.
MY OWN PALACE, AS YOU CAN SEE, IS A GLOWING TRIBUTE TO ALL THAT THE 50th CENTURY HAS TO OFFER!
THE MOST MODERN CONVENIENCES WILL BE YOURS TO ENJOY ONCE... EH?
LORD ZARRKO, WE BEG YOU-- A MOMENT OF YOUR TIME-- PLEASE!
MY TIME AT THE MOMENT IS MOST PRECIOUS, CITIZEN-- BUT YOU MAY SPEAK!
WE'VE A QUESTION TO ASK, LORD ZARRKO. HOW STAND THE ENER-GENERATORS?
WHEN YOU GAINED THE THRONE, YOU PROMISED THEY'D SOON BE REPAIRED-- YET THUS FAR WE'VE SEEN NO RESULTS!
LORD ZARRKO-- HOW MUCH LONGER MUST WE WAIT?
AS LONG AS IS NECESSARY, FOOLS!
YOU WILL HAVE ENERGY WHEN YOUR MASTER DECREES IT! UNTIL THEN-- BEGONE!
ZARRKO, METHINKS THINE IS A MOST TARNISHED JEWEL INDEED!
COME-- LET US HIE TO THY PALACE-- ERE MY STOMACH DOTH TURN!
SHORTLY...
ZARRKO, THOU DIDST ASK US TO HELP THEE SAVE THY CENTURY-- BUT MAYHAP 'TWOULD BE BETTER OFF DEAD!
WHAT ARE THE ENER-GENERATORS OF WHICH THY PEOPLE DOTH SPEAK?
WHY HAST THOU LEFT THY SUBJECTS WITHOUT POWER?

IT IS A VERY SIMPLE EQUATION, THUNDER GOD.
ENERGY PRODUCES MOBILITY... MOBILITY PRODUCES COMMUNICATION...COMMUNICATION PRODUCES DISSENT...AND DISSENT PRODUCES REBELLION!
BY WITHHOLDING ALL SOURCES OF ENERGY, I ELIMINATE THAT REBELLIOUS TEMPTATION--AND INSURE MY SUBJECTS' SAFETY!
IN SOOTH, ZARRKO--I HATH BEGUN TO WONDER IF SUCH CREATURES TRULY EXIST!
ALL THAT THREATENS THEM NOW IS--THE TIME-TWISTERS!
AND AS IF IN ANSWER TO THE VAST ASGARDIAN'S CHALLENGE, THE VERY SKIES ARE ABRUPTLY SPLIT BY LIGHTNING--
--AND THE OMINOUS CLASH OF THUNDER!
WONDER NO LONGER, FAT ONE--FOR THE PROOF OF MY CLAIMS DRAWS CLOSER EVEN NOW!
LOOK, ASGARDIANS--DO YOU SEE THE GHOSTLY NIMBUS APPEARING ON THE STREET BEFORE US?
"DO YOU SEE THE MIS-SHAPEN FIGURES THAT MATERIALIZE WITHIN?
"THERE THEY ARE, ASGARDIANS!
"THE TIME-TWISTERS WALK AMONG US!"
AND UNLESS WE CAN SOMEHOW DEFEAT THEM--
--THIS ENTIRE PLANET IS DOOMED!
NEXT ISSUE:
THE THRILLER YOU NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D SEE...
"THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD ENDS!"


THOR
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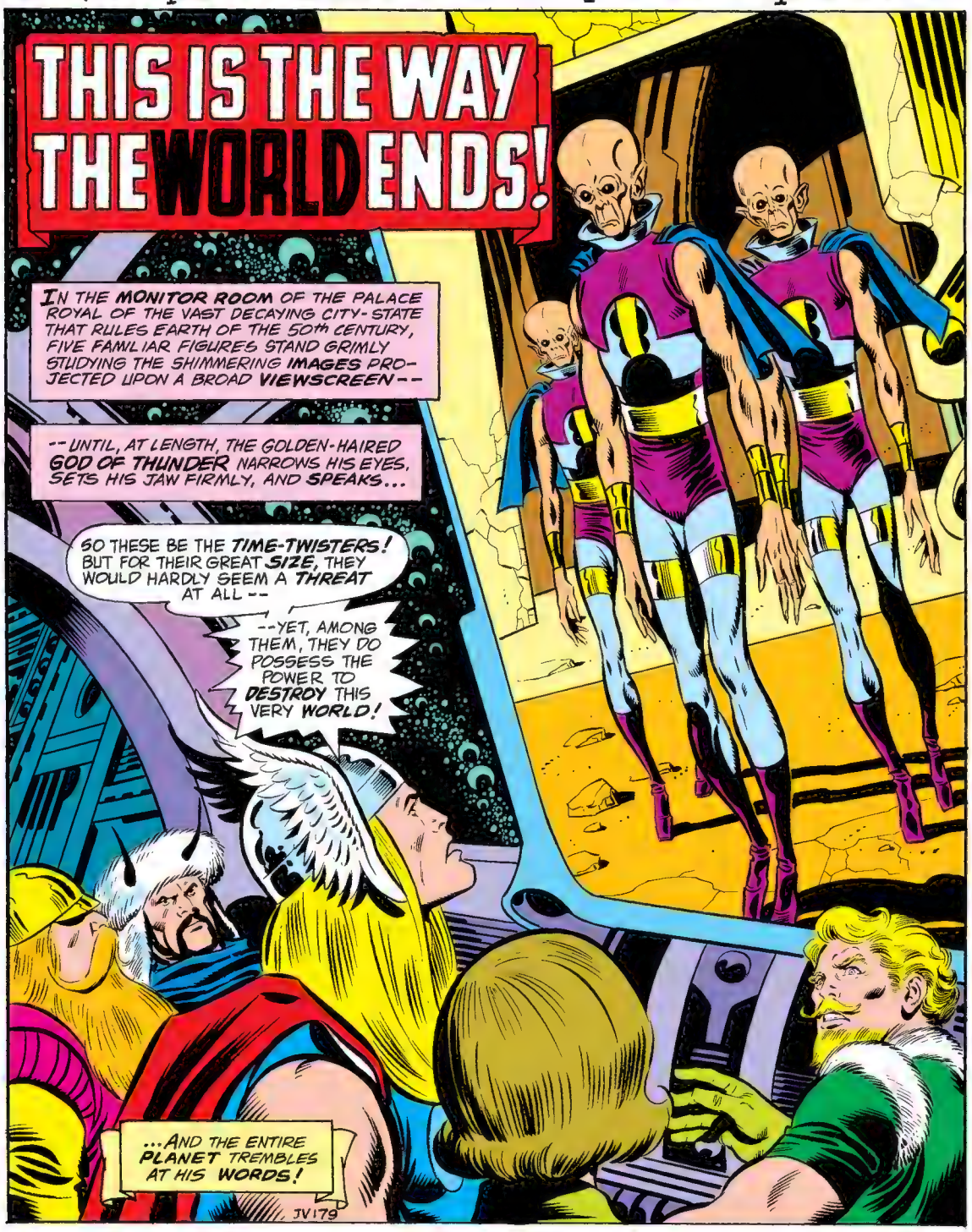
THE MIGHTY
THOR
IF I CANNOT DEFEAT THE TIME-TWISTERS, THE PLANET EARTH IS DOOMED!
BUT EVEN MY MYSTIC MALLET CANNOT STOP THEM!
BUCKLER & SINNOTT
AT LAST! THE BATTLE THE THUNDER GOD CANNOT HOPE TO WIN!
THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD ENDS!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR! ™

LEN WEIN WRITER/EDITOR | JOHN BUSCEMA & JOE SINNOTT ILLUSTRATORS | GLYNIS WEIN COLORIST | JOE ROSEN LETTERER


THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD ENDS!
IN THE MONITOR ROOM OF THE PALACE ROYAL OF THE VAST DECAYING CITY-STATE THAT RULES EARTH OF THE 50th CENTURY, FIVE FAMILIAR FIGURES STAND GRIMLY STUDYING THE SHIMMERING IMAGES PROJECTED UPON A BROAD VIEWSCREEN--
--UNTIL, AT LENGTH, THE GOLDEN-HAIRED GOD OF THUNDER NARROWS HIS EYES, SETS HIS JAW FIRMLY, AND SPEAKS...
SO THESE BE THE TIME-TWISTERS! BUT FOR THEIR GREAT SIZE, THEY WOULD HARDLY SEEM A THREAT AT ALL--
--YET, AMONG THEM, THEY DO POSSESS THE POWER TO DESTROY THIS VERY WORLD!
...AND THE ENTIRE PLANET TREMBLES AT HIS WORDS!
JV179

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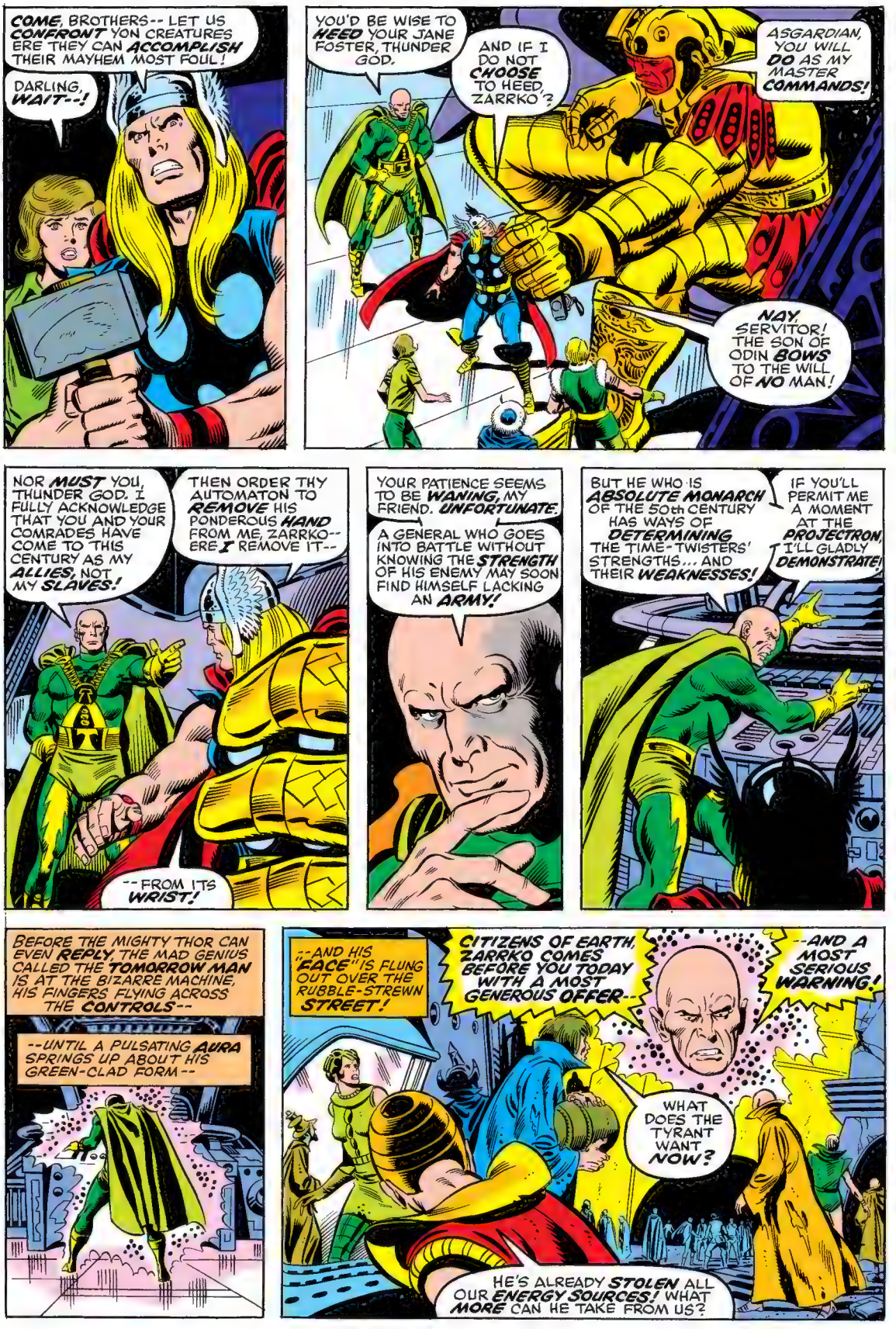
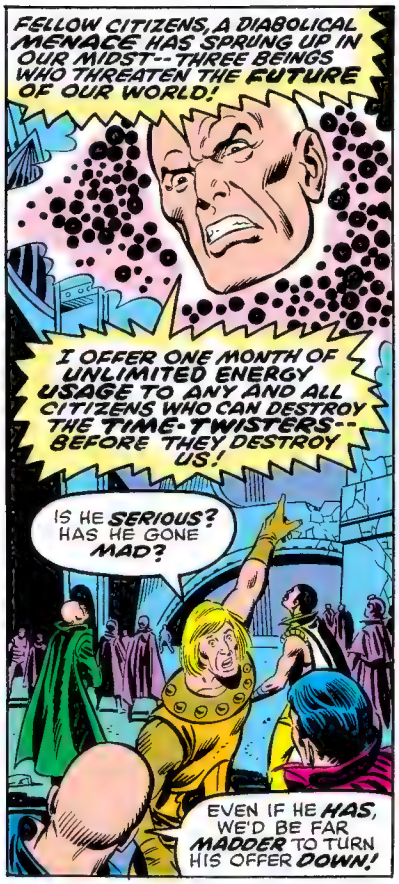

COME, BROTHERS-- LET US CONFRONT YON CREATURES ERE THEY CAN ACCOMPLISH THEIR MAYHEM MOST FOUL!
DARLING, WAIT--!
YOU'D BE WISE TO HEED YOUR JANE FOSTER, THUNDER GOD.
AND IF I DO NOT CHOOSE TO HEED, ZARRKO?
ASGARDIAN, YOU WILL DO AS MY MASTER COMMANDS!
NAY, SERVITOR! THE SON OF ODIN BOWS TO THE WILL OF NO MAN!
NOR MUST YOU, THUNDER GOD. I FULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU AND YOUR COMRADES HAVE COME TO THIS CENTURY AS MY ALLIES, NOT MY SLAVES!
THEN ORDER THY AUTOMATON TO REMOVE HIS PONDEROUS HAND FROM ME, ZARRKO-- ERE I REMOVE IT--
--FROM ITS WRIST!
YOUR PATIENCE SEEMS TO BE WANING, MY FRIEND. UNFORTUNATE.
A GENERAL WHO GOES INTO BATTLE WITHOUT KNOWING THE STRENGTH OF HIS ENEMY MAY SOON FIND HIMSELF LACKING AN ARMY!
BUT HE WHO IS ABSOLUTE MONARCH OF THE 50th CENTURY HAS WAYS OF DETERMINING THE TIME-TWISTERS' STRENGTHS... AND THEIR WEAKNESSES!
IF YOU'LL PERMIT ME A MOMENT AT THE PROJECTRON, I'LL GLADLY DEMONSTRATE!
BEFORE THE MIGHTY THOR CAN EVEN REPLY, THE MAD GENIUS CALLED THE TOMORROW MAN IS AT THE BIZARRE MACHINE, HIS FINGERS FLYING ACROSS THE CONTROLS--
--UNTIL A PULSATING AURA SPRINGS UP ABOUT HIS GREEN-CLAD FORM--
--AND HIS "FACE" IS FLUNG OUT OVER THE RUBBLE-STREWN STREET!
CITIZENS OF EARTH, ZARRKO COMES BEFORE YOU TODAY WITH A MOST GENEROUS OFFER--
--AND A MOST SERIOUS WARNING!
WHAT DOES THE TYRANT WANT NOW?
HE'S ALREADY STOLEN ALL OUR ENERGY SOURCES! WHAT MORE CAN HE TAKE FROM US?


FELLOW CITIZENS, A DIABOLICAL MENACE HAS SPRUNG UP IN OUR MIDST--THREE BEINGS WHO THREATEN THE FUTURE OF OUR WORLD!
I OFFER ONE MONTH OF UNLIMITED ENERGY USAGE TO ANY AND ALL CITIZENS WHO CAN DESTROY THE TIME-TWISTERS--BEFORE THEY DESTROY US!
IS HE SERIOUS? HAS HE GONE MAD?
EVEN IF HE HAS, WE'D BE FAR MADDER TO TURN HIS OFFER DOWN!

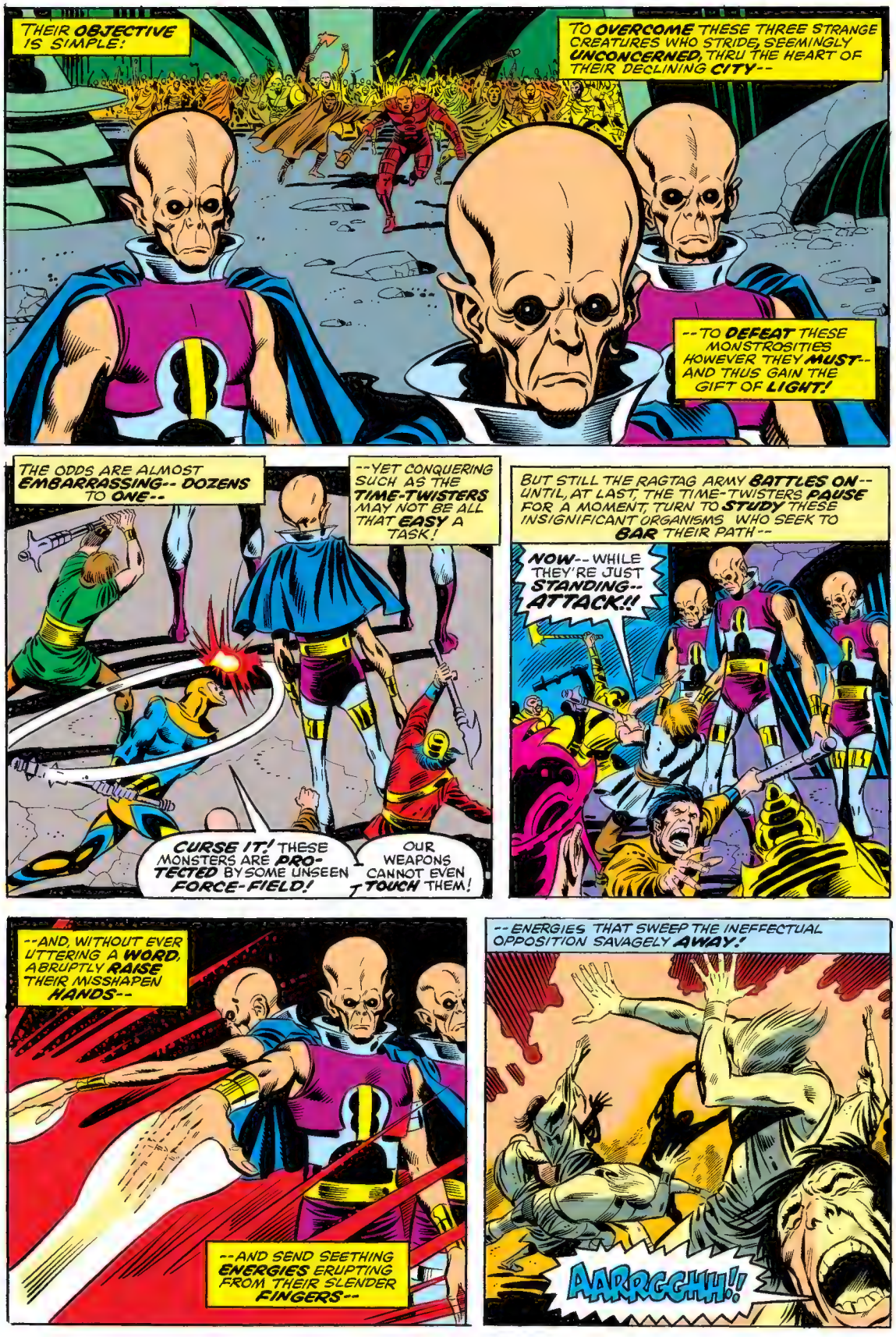
THY TACTICS SIT ILL WITH ME, ZARRKO. I LIKE NOT USING HELPLESS MORTALS AS PAWNS!
NOT PAWNS, THOR--WARRIORS!
MY SUBJECTS DESERVE THE RIGHT TO PROTECT THEIR OWN PLANET BEFORE WE DO BATTLE FOR THEM!
NONE OF THEM WILL RISK THEIR LIVES UNWILLINGLY, ASGARDIAN. THE CHOICE IS THEIRS!

BUT IN SOME OF THE DIMLY-LIT HOVELS, IT IS A CHOICE NOT EASILY MADE.
I BEG YOU, DEREK--DON'T DO THIS THING! IT'S TOO DANGEROUS!
NO MATTER WHAT THE DANGER, GAYLA--I MUST GO!
DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT THIS COULD MEAN TO US?

ONE FULL MONTH OF UNLIMITED ENERGY--A CHANCE TO LIVE IN AN ELECTRIC WORLD AGAIN--TO GET AWAY FROM THE FILTH AND SQUALOR WE LIVE IN NOW!
I CAN'T DENY YOU THAT OPPORTUNITY, GAYLA.
DEREK, DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? NONE OF THAT MEANS ANYTHING TO ME!
ALL THAT MATTERS TO ME IS... YOU.

AND ALL THAT I CARE ABOUT IS YOU, GAYLA MY LOVE.
THAT'S WHY I HAVE TO GO--
--OR I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO FACE MYSELF AGAIN!

AND IT SEEMS DEREK HAS MADE THE CHOICE OF THE MASSES--
--FOR THE AVENUES ARE FILLED WITH FRIGHTENED, DESPERATE FACES--
--WITH MEN ARMED ONLY WITH MAKESHIFT WEAPONS--AND AN ALL-CONSUMING NEED!

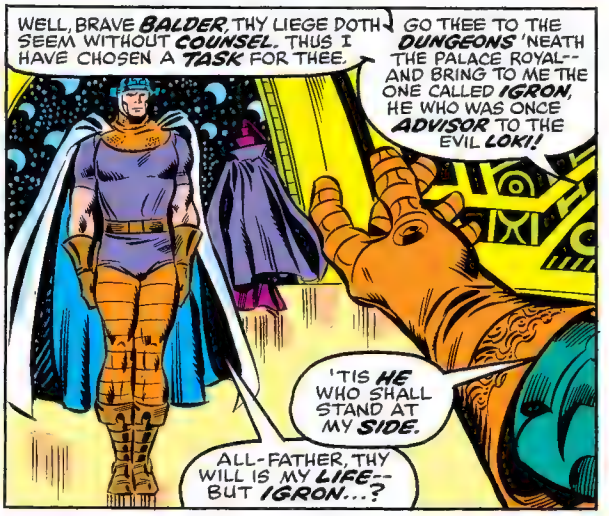

THEIR OBJECTIVE IS SIMPLE!
TO OVERCOME THESE THREE STRANGE CREATURES WHO STRIDE, SEEMINGLY UNCONCERNED, THRU THE HEART OF THEIR DECLINING CITY--
--TO DEFEAT THESE MONSTROSITIES HOWEVER THEY MUST-- AND THUS GAIN THE GIFT OF LIGHT!
THE ODDS ARE ALMOST EMBARRASSING-- DOZENS TO ONE--
--YET CONQUERING SUCH AS THE TIME-TWISTERS MAY NOT BE ALL THAT EASY A TASK!
CURSE IT! THESE MONSTERS ARE PRO-TECTED BY SOME UNSEEN FORCE-FIELD!
OUR WEAPONS CANNOT EVEN TOUCH THEM!
BUT STILL THE RAGTAG ARMY BATTLES ON-- UNTIL, AT LAST, THE TIME-TWISTERS PAUSE FOR A MOMENT, TURN TO STUDY THESE INSIGNIFICANT ORGANISMS WHO SEEK TO BAR THEIR PATH--
NOW-- WHILE THEY'RE JUST STANDING-- ATTACK!!
--AND, WITHOUT EVER UTTERING A WORD, ABRUPTLY RAISE THEIR MISSHAPEN HANDS--
--AND SEND SEETHING ENERGIES ERUPTING FROM THEIR SLENDER FINGERS--
--ENERGIES THAT SWEEP THE INEFFECTUAL OPPOSITION SAVAGELY AWAY!
AARRGGHH!!

UNFETTERED FURY RAGES IN THE FACES OF THOSE WHO REMAIN ERECT.
LOOK WHAT THESE MONSTERS HAVE DONE TO OUR FRIENDS!
ARE WE GOING TO LET THEM GET AWAY WITH THIS, CITIZENS?
ARE WE??
THE ANSWER RISES FROM THE CROWD AS A SINGLE VOICE...
NEVER! NEVER!!
AND ONCE MORE THEY SURGE TO THE ATTACK!
THE TIME-TWISTERS GREET THIS NEW AGGRESSION WITH BALEFUL GLARES--
--AND SIZZLING POWER THAT LANCES FORTH FROM THEIR STAR-DAPPLED EYES!
WRITHING IN AGONY, THE EARTHMEN STAND ROOTED TO THE SPOT--
--THEN FIND THEMSELVES PLUNGED MADLY INTO TIME'S DARK ABYSS!
IN THE SPACE OF A HEARTBEAT, STRONG VIRILE MEN BECOME SALLOW-FACED ANCIENTS AND ROSY-CHEEKED YOUTHS--
--ALL PANIC-STRICKEN VICTIMS OF BEINGS WHO CAN CONTROL THE RUSHING FLOW OF TIME!
THE TRANSFORMATION DOES NOT CEASE--UNTIL THE CRACKED AND BROKEN SIDEWALKS ARE LITTERED WITH THE BODIES OF THOSE WHO HAVE LIVED OUT THEIR LIVES IN AN INSTANT--
--AND THOSE WHO NOW HAVE NEVER LIVED AT ALL!

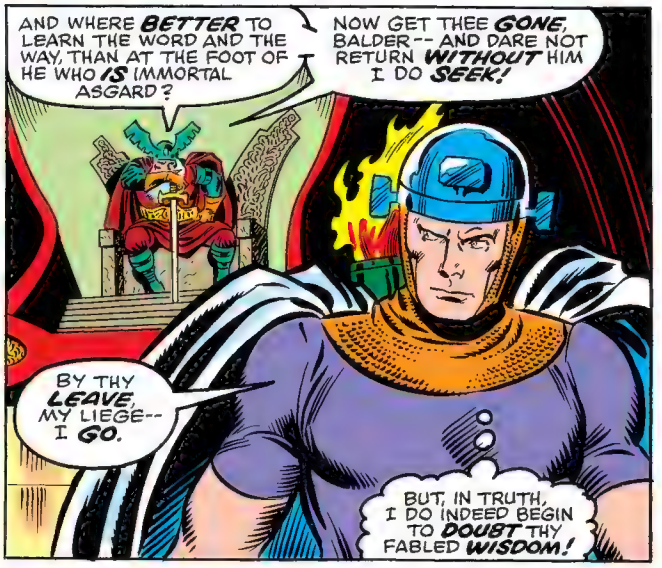
WITHIN MOMENTS, BOTH ARE GONE-- THEIR PASSING MARKED ONLY BY BITS OF TATTERED CLOTH AND EDDYING PILES OF GRAY-WHITE DUST--
--AND SOON EVEN THE DUST HAS BLOWN AWAY.
SO THIS IS HOW THOU DOST TEST THINE ENEMY, ZARRKO-- BY SACRIFICING THY SUBJECTS LIKE SLAUGHTER-RIPE LAMBS?
PERHAPS 'TIS THY WAY, TOMORROW MAN-- BUT 'TIS NOT THE WAY OF THOR!
STAND THEE ASIDE, ZARRKO! NOW SHALL THE TIME-TWISTERS FEEL THE VENGEANCE OF WARRIORS BORN!
ANGRILY, THE THUNDER GOD AND HIS COMPANIONS BOLT FROM THE CHAMBER, THEIR BATTLE CRY STRONG ON THEIR LIPS-- "FOR ODIN! FOR ASGARD!"
AND ON THAT MOST APPROPRIATE NOTE, LET US SPAN TIME, SPACE, AND THE RAINBOW BRIDGE BIFROST, TO VISIT THE REALM ETERNAL AND A DIFFERENT PALACE ROYAL--
--WHERE A VERY DIFFERENT MONARCH ATTENDS TO AFFAIRS OF STATE.
MILORD ODIN, EVEN NOW THY SON AND HIS FELLOWS HAVE JOURNEYED TO THE 50th CENTURY TO AVERT THE DESTRUCTION OF EARTH--
--YET STILL HAST THOU BANISHED HIM FROM ASGARD FOR LOVING THE MORTAL JANE FOSTER!
ONCE AGAIN I MOST HUMBLY BESEECH THEE, MILORD-- MUST THY JUDGMENT BE SO HARSH?
THOU HAST BEEN MY ADVISOR ALMOST LONGER THAN THOUGHT CAN RECALL, VIZIER--
--THUS THY WORDS TROUBLE ME MOST SORELY!

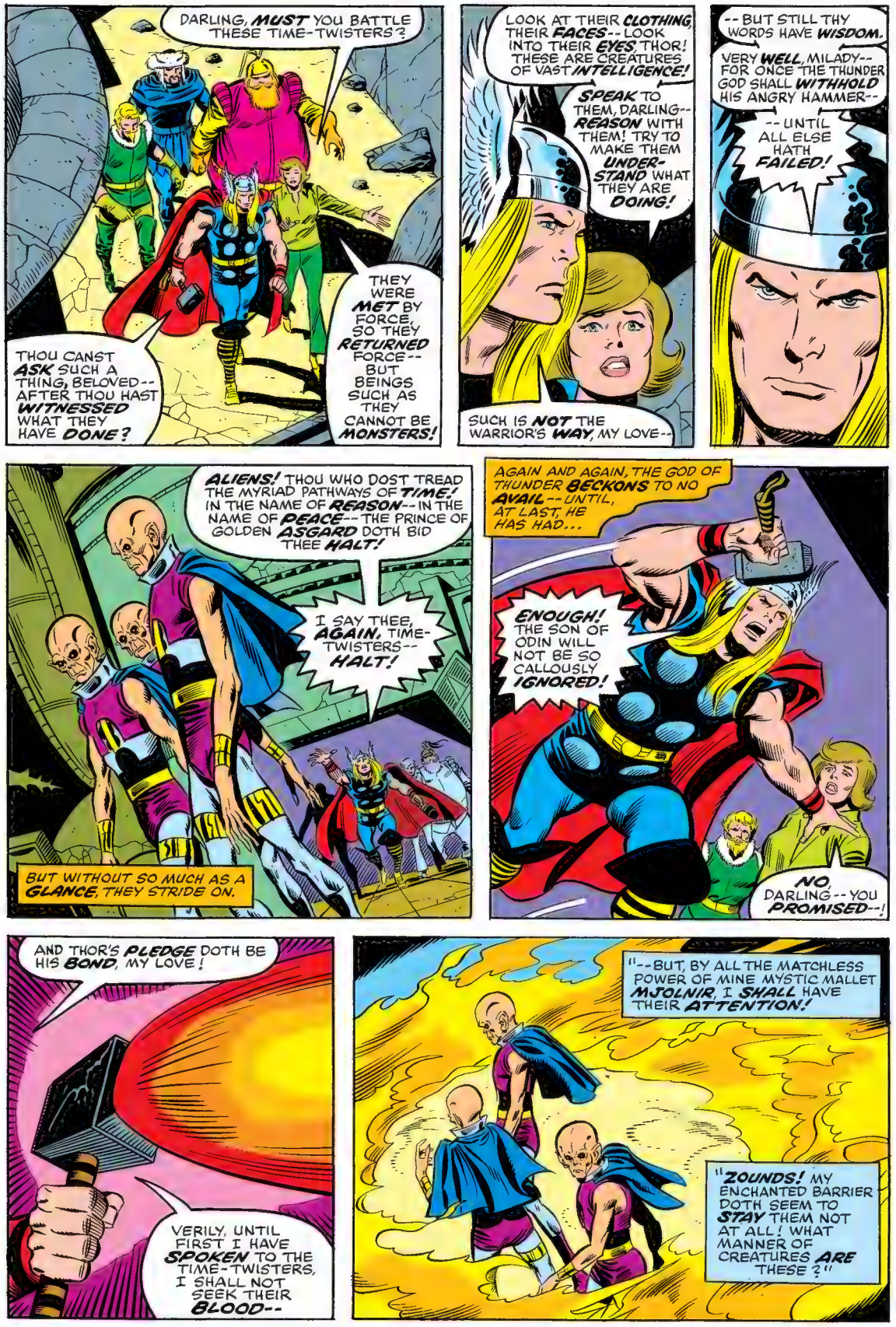
THOU HAST HEARD MY ROYAL DECREE--THOU HAST HEARD ME STATE THAT I WOULD SPEAK OF THE MATTER NOT AGAIN--YET STILL DOST THOU PERSIST IN THY TIRESOME PLEADING!
BUT MY LIEGE...
SILENCE! I CAN DIVINE BUT ONE REASON FOR THY CONSTANT DISOBEDIENCE!
THOU HAST SERVED AT MY SIDE LOYALLY AND LONG, VIZIER--MAYHAP TOO LONG!
METHINKS 'TIS TIME THOU DIDST TAKE THY REST--AND RETIRED TO THE TOWER OF SOLITUDE, THERE TO STUDY THE ANCIENT SCROLLS, UNTIL SUCH TIME AS I DO SUMMON THEE ANEW!

MY LIEGE, THY WORDS DO CUT THRU ME LIKE STEEL--BUT AS EVER SHALL I DO AS THOU HAST COMMANDED WITHOUT QUESTION--WITHOUT HESITATION.
I SHALL GO TO YON TIMELESS TOWER TO AWAIT THY SUMMONS--AND WHILE I WAIT, I SHALL PRAY THOU HAST CHOSEN A'RIGHT!
FARETHEEWELL, MILORD--UNTIL WE DO MEET AGAIN.

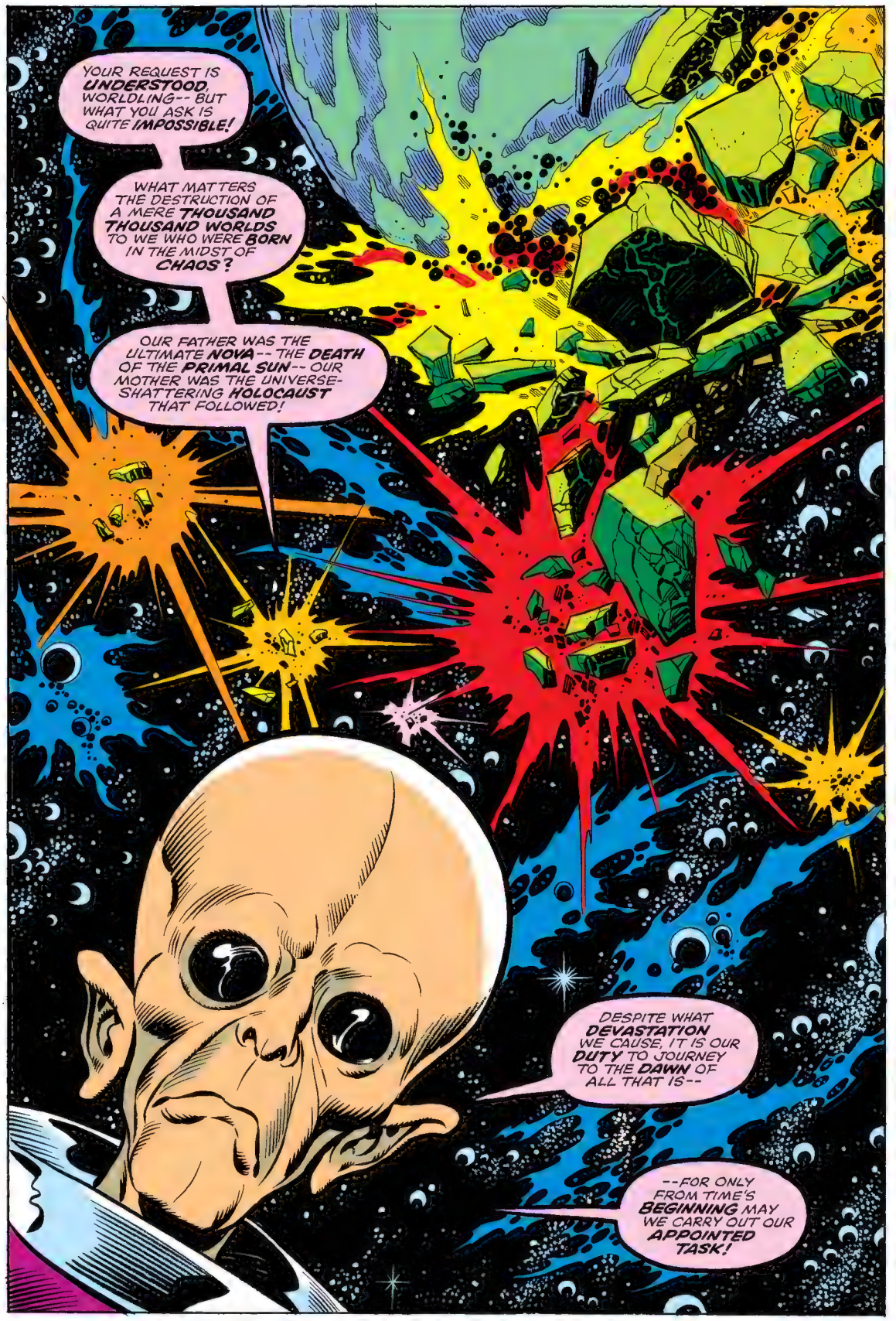

WELL, BRAVE BALDER, THY LIEGE DOTH SEEM WITHOUT COUNSEL. THUS I HAVE CHOSEN A TASK FOR THEE.
GO THEE TO THE DUNGEONS 'NEATH THE PALACE ROYAL--AND BRING TO ME THE ONE CALLED IGRON, HE WHO WAS ONCE ADVISOR TO THE EVIL LOKI!
'TIS HE WHO SHALL STAND AT MY SIDE.
ALL-FATHER, THY WILL IS MY LIFE--BUT IGRON...?

DOST THOU TOO DOUBT MY WISDOM, BALDER?
METHINKS SLY IGRON HATH SUFFERED PUNISHMENT ENOUGH! 'TIS TIME HIS REHABILITATION WAS BEGUN!

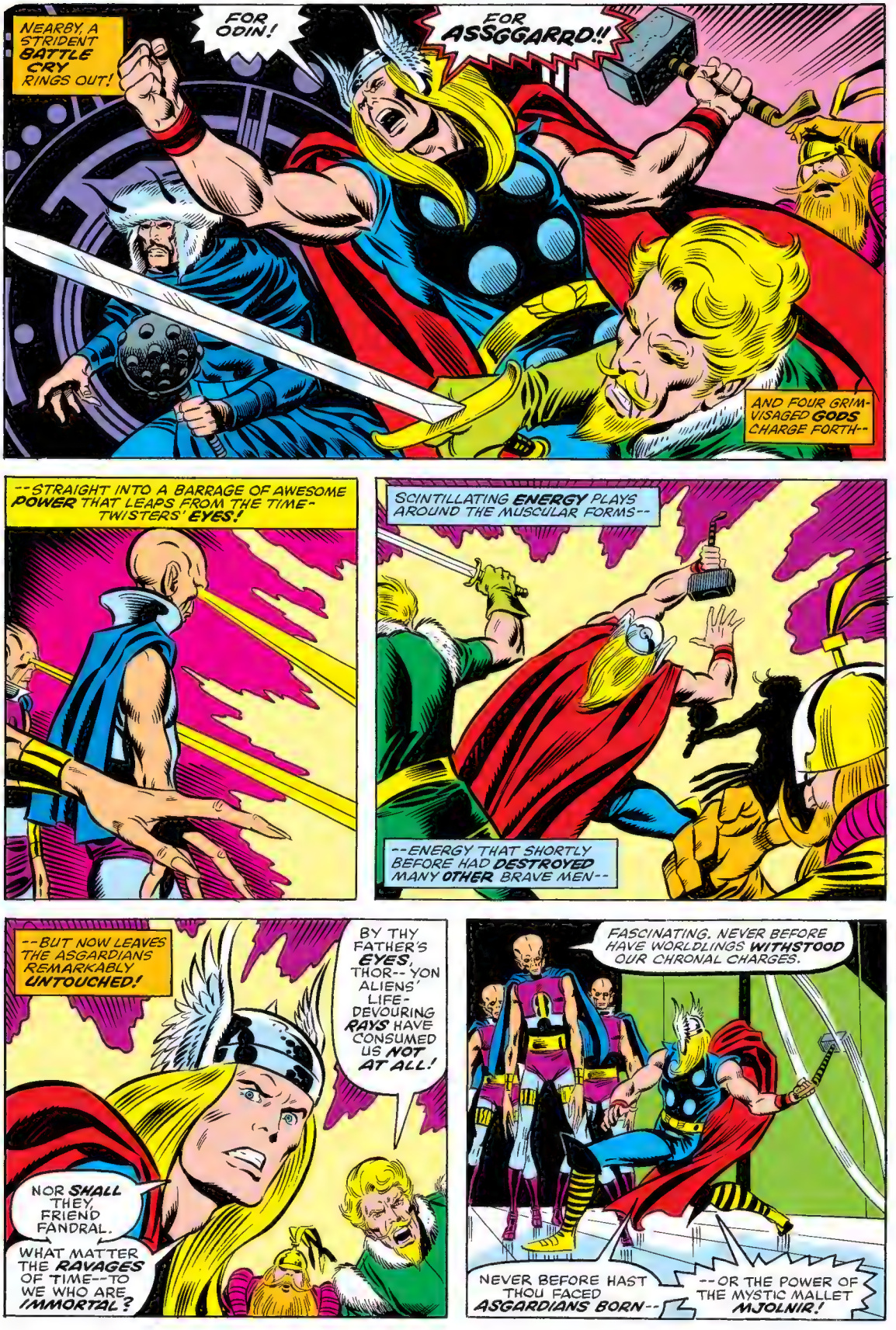

AND WHERE BETTER TO LEARN THE WORD AND THE WAY, THAN AT THE FOOT OF HE WHO IS IMMORTAL ASGARD?
NOW GET THEE GONE, BALDER--AND DARE NOT RETURN WITHOUT HIM I DO SEEK!
BY THY LEAVE, MY LIEGE--I GO.
BUT, IN TRUTH, I DO INDEED BEGIN TO DOUBT THY FABLED WISDOM!

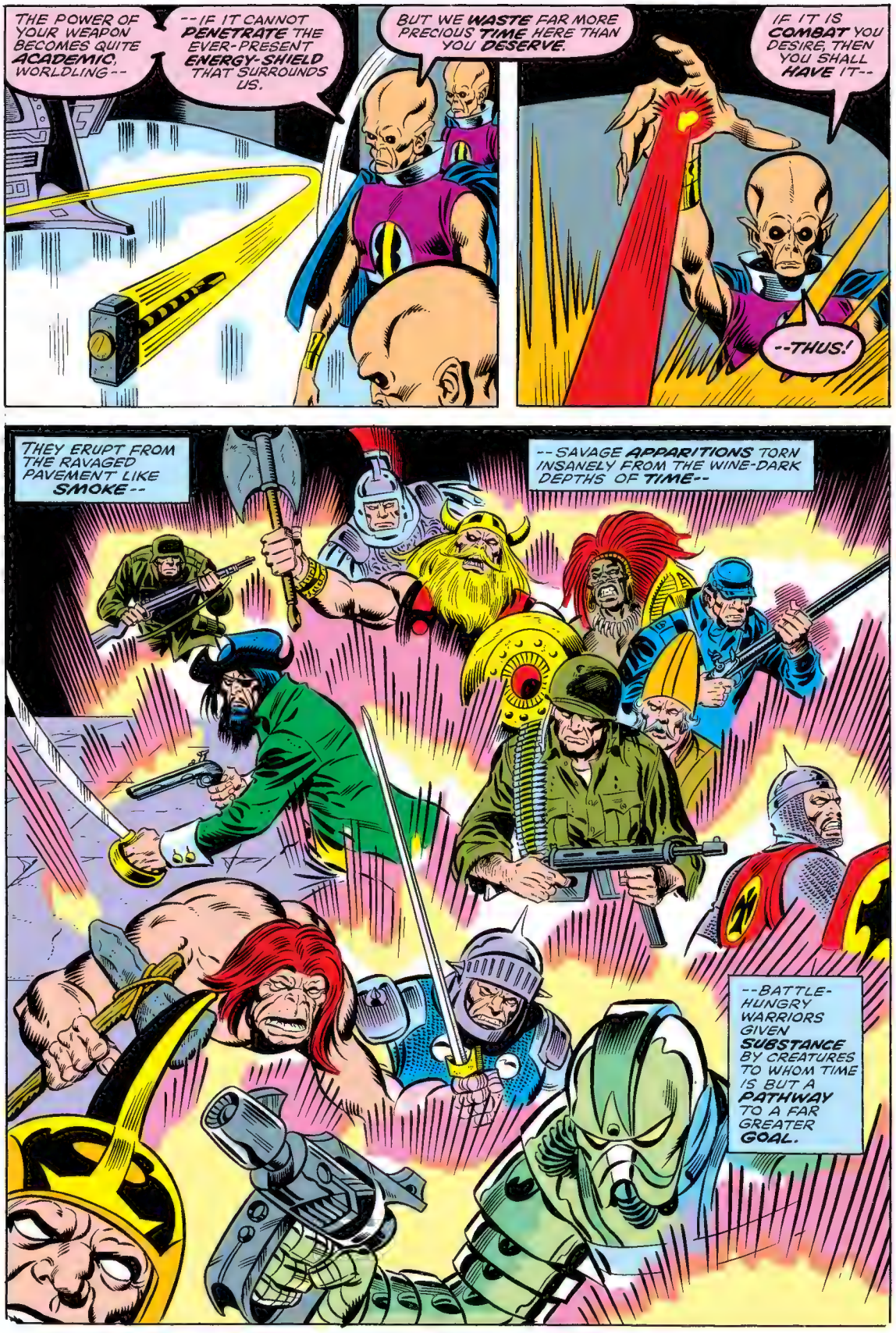

DARLING, MUST YOU BATTLE THESE TIME-TWISTERS?
THOU CANST ASK SUCH A THING, BELOVED-- AFTER THOU HAST WITNESSED WHAT THEY HAVE DONE?
THEY WERE MET BY FORCE, SO THEY RETURNED FORCE-- BUT BEINGS SUCH AS THEY CANNOT BE MONSTERS!
LOOK AT THEIR CLOTHING, THEIR FACES-- LOOK INTO THEIR EYES, THOR! THESE ARE CREATURES OF VAST INTELLIGENCE!
SPEAK TO THEM, DARLING-- REASON WITH THEM! TRY TO MAKE THEM UNDER-STAND WHAT THEY ARE DOING!
SUCH IS NOT THE WARRIOR'S WAY, MY LOVE--
-- BUT STILL THY WORDS HAVE WISDOM.
VERY WELL, MILADY-- FOR ONCE THE THUNDER GOD SHALL WITHHOLD HIS ANGRY HAMMER--
-- UNTIL ALL ELSE HATH FAILED!
ALIENS! THOU WHO DOST TREAD THE MYRIAD PATHWAYS OF TIME! IN THE NAME OF REASON-- IN THE NAME OF PEACE-- THE PRINCE OF GOLDEN ASGARD DOTH BID THEE HALT!
I SAY THEE, AGAIN, TIME-TWISTERS-- HALT!
BUT WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A GLANCE, THEY STRIDE ON.
AGAIN AND AGAIN, THE GOD OF THUNDER BECKONS TO NO AVAIL-- UNTIL, AT LAST, HE HAS HAD...
ENOUGH! THE SON OF ODIN WILL NOT BE SO CALLOUSLY IGNORED!
NO, DARLING-- YOU PROMISED--!
AND THOR'S PLEDGE DOTH BE HIS BOND, MY LOVE!
VERILY, UNTIL FIRST I HAVE SPOKEN TO THE TIME-TWISTERS, I SHALL NOT SEEK THEIR BLOOD--
"-- BUT, BY ALL THE MATCHLESS POWER OF MINE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR, I SHALL HAVE THEIR ATTENTION!
"ZOUNDS! MY ENCHANTED BARRIER DOTH SEEM TO STAY THEM NOT AT ALL! WHAT MANNER OF CREATURES ARE THESE?"

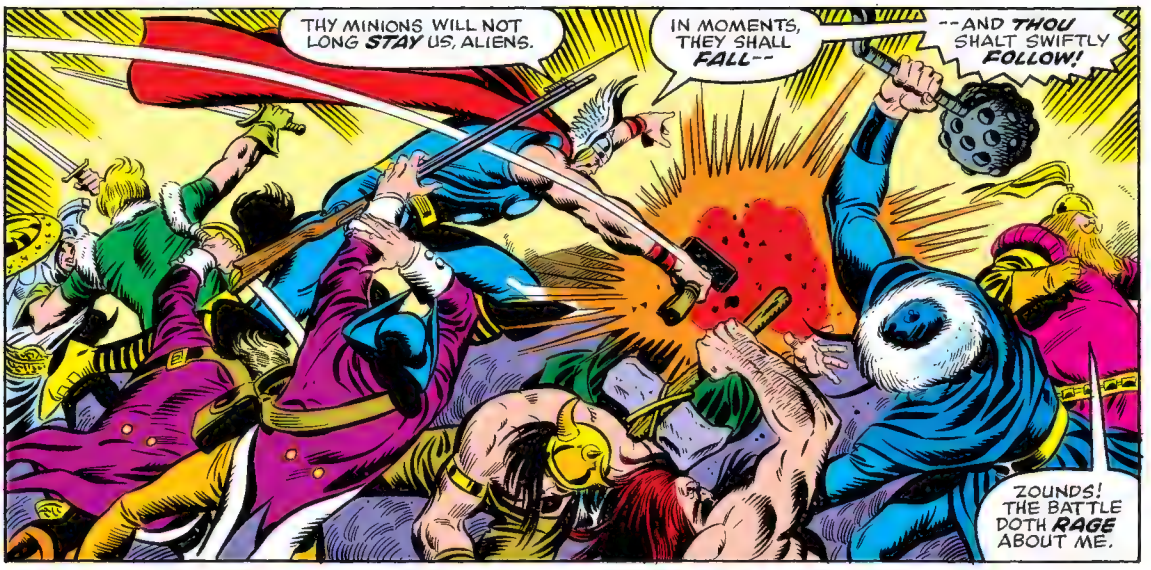
A QUESTION.
AT OUR INCEPTION, IT WAS DECREED ALL QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED--
--FOR IN ANSWERS ALONE MAY THE QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE BE FULFILLED.
THUS SPEAK, WORLDLING. VOICE YOUR QUESTION ANEW.
WHAT KNOWLEDGE DO YOU SEEK FROM WE WHO ARE KNOWLEDGE INCARNATE?
KNOWLEDGE OF THY PURPOSE... THINE ORIGINS. WHENCE DOST THOU COME? WHERE DOST THOU GO?
WHY DOST THOU SUNDER ENTIRE PLANETS IN THY WAKE?
WE ARE PILGRIMS-- ON A JOURNEY FROM THE END OF TIME, TO FIND TIME'S BEGINNINGS.
OUR SEARCH HAS CARRIED US ACROSS A THOUSAND THOUSAND WORLDS-- YET STILL WE SEEM NO CLOSER TO OUR GOAL.
THOU HAST LEFT ONE QUESTION UNANSWERED, TIME-TWISTER.
THOU WHO DOST CLAIM TO BE THE PERSONIFICATION OF WISDOM...
DOST THOU KNOW WHAT THY PASSING HATH DONE TO THOSE MYRIAD WORLDS?
ONE WOULD ASSUME THEY ARE SO MUCH THE BETTER FOR THE GIFT OF LEARNING WE HAVE GRANTED THEM.
NAY, ALIEN-- THOU HAST DESTROYED THEM!
THE ENERGIES UNLEASHED WHENE'ER THOU DOST REND THE VERY FABRIC OF TIME DOTH CREATE COSMIC UPHEAVALS WHICH HAVE REDUCED EACH WORLD TO A BLACKENED CINDER!
FOR THE SAKE OF THIS WORLD AND COUNTLESS WORLDS BEYOND, TIME-TWISTERS-- THOU MUST ABANDON THY QUEST!

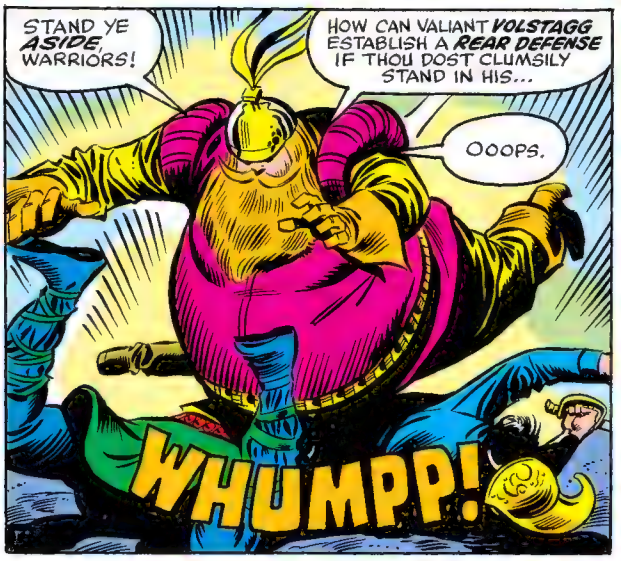

YOUR REQUEST IS UNDERSTOOD, WORLDLING-- BUT WHAT YOU ASK IS QUITE IMPOSSIBLE!
WHAT MATTERS THE DESTRUCTION OF A MERE THOUSAND THOUSAND WORLDS TO WE WHO WERE BORN IN THE MIDST OF CHAOS?
OUR FATHER WAS THE ULTIMATE NOVA-- THE DEATH OF THE PRIMAL SUN-- OUR MOTHER WAS THE UNIVERSE-SHATTERING HOLOCAUST THAT FOLLOWED!
DESPITE WHAT DEVASTATION WE CAUSE, IT IS OUR DUTY TO JOURNEY TO THE DAWN OF ALL THAT IS--
--FOR ONLY FROM TIME'S BEGINNING MAY WE CARRY OUT OUR APPOINTED TASK!

ABANDON OUR QUEST, WORLDLING?
WE WOULD SOONER ABANDON OUR LIVES!
THEN-- SO BE IT!
I HAVE TRIED TO REASON WITH THESE CREATURES AS THOU HADST ASKED, JANE.
NOW I SHALL DEAL WITH THEM MY WAY!
AMIDST THE RUINS, A FIGURE STIRS--
--A FIGURE WHO'D BEEN LOST BENEATH THE RUBBLE DURING THE FIRST CATASTROPHIC ASSAULT UPON THE TIME-TWISTERS--
--AND THUS HAD BEEN SPARED AN "UNTIMELY" DEMISE.
HE STAGGERS TO HIS KNEES--
--STARES DUMBFOUNDED AT THE MOUNDS OF DUST AND TATTERS THAT ARE ALL THAT REMAIN OF THOSE WHO HAD BEEN HIS NEIGHBORS--
--HIS FRIENDS--
--AND THE MAN CALLED DEREK... DESPAIRS!
ZARRKO DID THIS!
HE SENT US ALL ON THIS FOOL'S ERRAND... THIS SUICIDE CHASE!
ZARRKO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS CARNAGE--
--AND HE'S GOING TO PAY FOR IT!
THUS SAYING, THE BEDRAGGLED FIGURE STUMBLES AWAY DOWN THE CRACKED AND BROKEN STREET--
--AND IS SOON SWALLOWED BY THE SHADOWS OF THE PALACE.

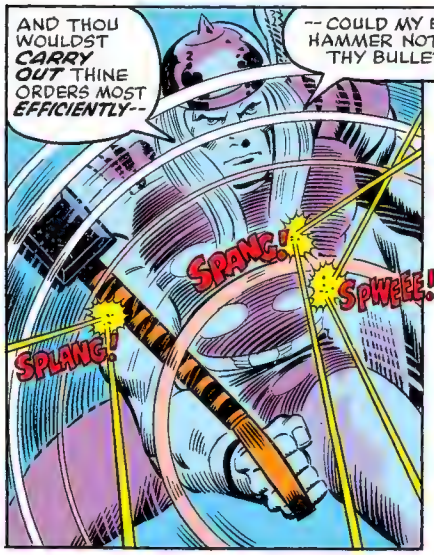

NEARBY, A STRIDENT BATTLE CRY RINGS OUT!
FOR ODIN!
FOR ASSGGARRD!!
AND FOUR GRIM-VISAGED GODS CHARGE FORTH--
--STRAIGHT INTO A BARRAGE OF AWESOME POWER THAT LEAPS FROM THE TIME-TWISTERS' EYES!
SCINTILLATING ENERGY PLAYS AROUND THE MUSCULAR FORMS--
--ENERGY THAT SHORTLY BEFORE HAD DESTROYED MANY OTHER BRAVE MEN--
--BUT NOW LEAVES THE ASGARDIANS REMARKABLY UNTOUCHED!
BY THY FATHER'S EYES, THOR-- YON ALIENS' LIFE-DEVOURING RAYS HAVE CONSUMED US NOT AT ALL!
NOR SHALL THEY, FRIEND FANDRAL.
WHAT MATTER THE RAVAGES OF TIME--TO WE WHO ARE IMMORTAL?
FASCINATING. NEVER BEFORE HAVE WORLDLINGS WITHSTOOD OUR CHRONAL CHARGES.
NEVER BEFORE HAST THOU FACED ASGARDIANS BORN--
--OR THE POWER OF THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR!


THE POWER OF YOUR WEAPON BECOMES QUITE ACADEMIC, WORLDLING--
--IF IT CANNOT PENETRATE THE EVER-PRESENT ENERGY-SHIELD THAT SURROUNDS US.
BUT WE WASTE FAR MORE PRECIOUS TIME HERE THAN YOU DESERVE.
IF IT IS COMBAT YOU DESIRE, THEN YOU SHALL HAVE IT--
--THUS!
THEY ERUPT FROM THE RAVAGED PAVEMENT LIKE SMOKE--
--SAVAGE APPARITIONS TORN INSANELY FROM THE WINE-DARK DEPTHS OF TIME--
--BATTLE-HUNGRY WARRIORS GIVEN SUBSTANCE BY CREATURES TO WHOM TIME IS BUT A PATHWAY TO A FAR GREATER GOAL.


THY MINIONS WILL NOT LONG STAY US, ALIENS.
IN MOMENTS, THEY SHALL FALL--
--AND THOU SHALT SWIFTLY FOLLOW!
ZOUNDS! THE BATTLE DOTH RAGE ABOUT ME.

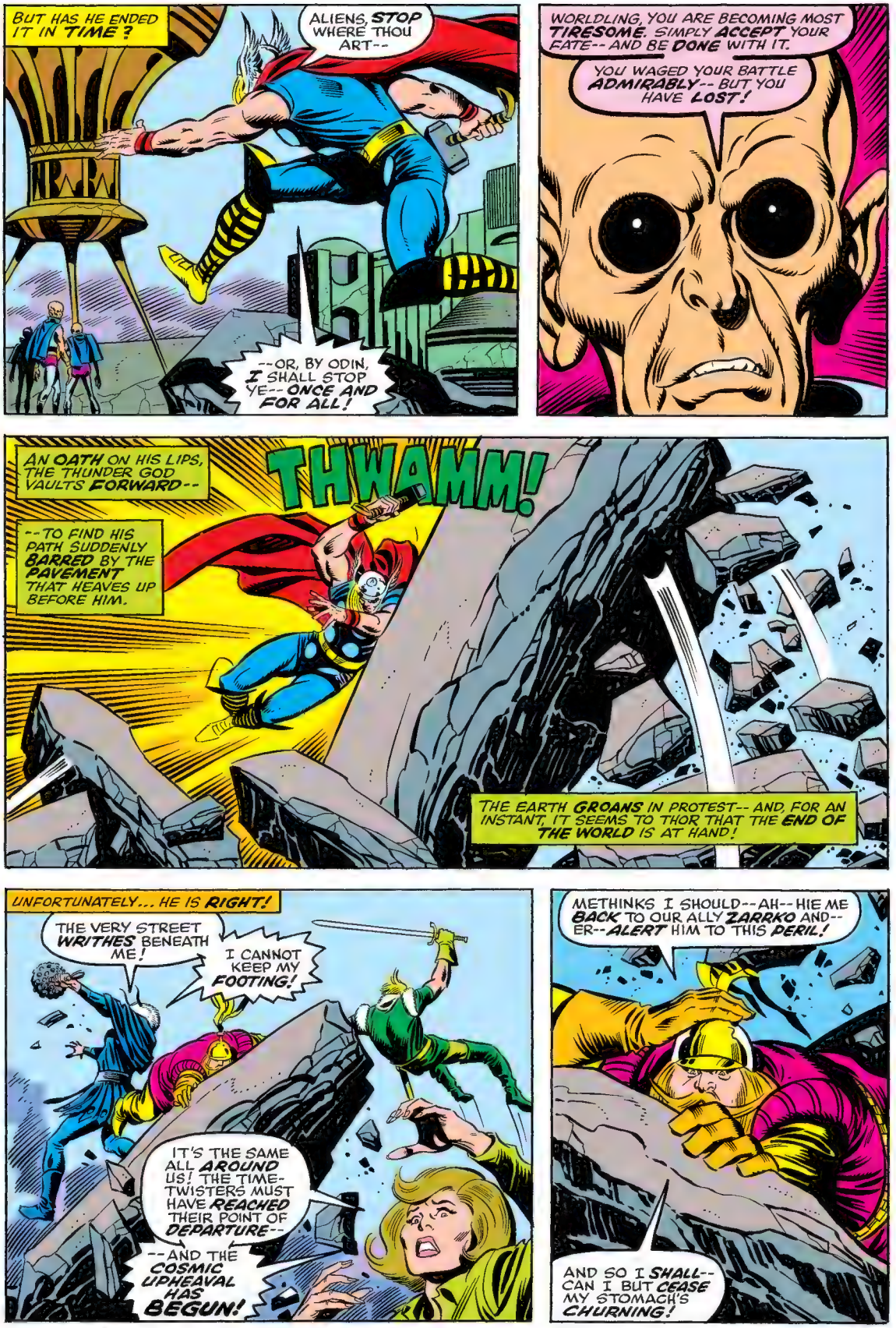

STAND YE ASIDE, WARRIORS!
HOW CAN VALIANT VOLSTAGG ESTABLISH A REAR DEFENSE IF THOU DOST CLUMSILY STAND IN HIS...
OOOPS.
WHUMPP!

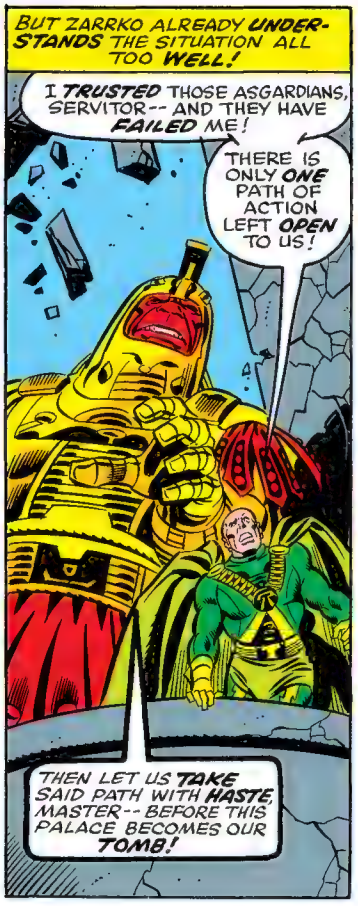
I DUNNO WHAT'S GOIN'ON AROUND HERE, BUT I GOT ME MY ORDERS--
BHUD-UD-UD-AH!
--AND THEM ORDERS SAY-- SHOOT TO KILL!

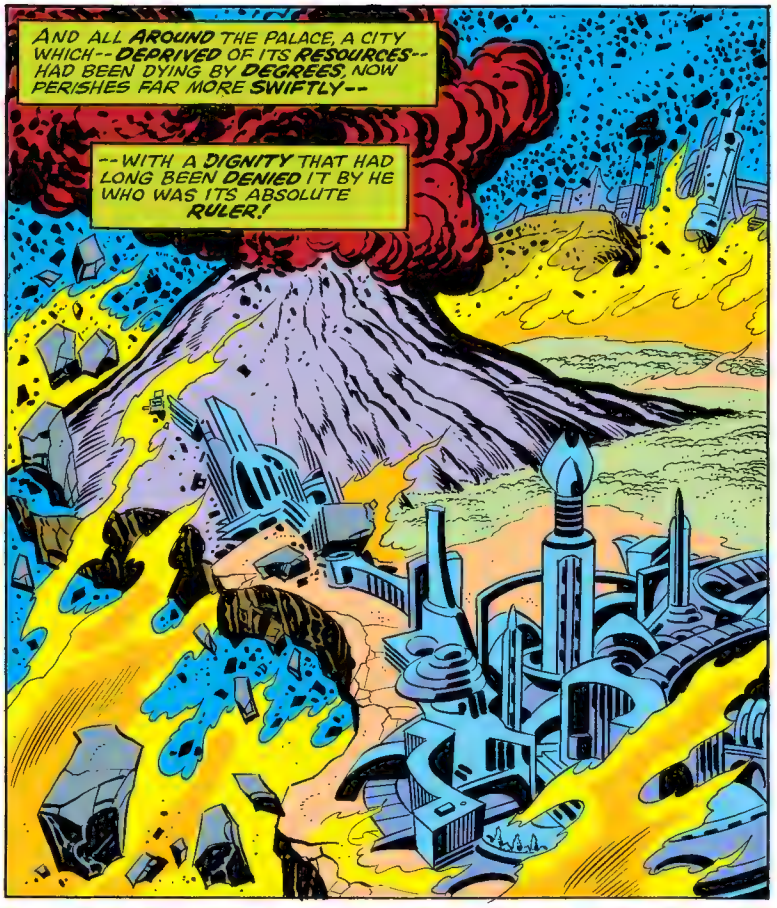

AND THOU WOULDST CARRY OUT THINE ORDERS MOST EFFICIENTLY--
--COULD MY ENCHANTED HAMMER NOT DEFLECT THY BULLETS--
SPANG!
SPWEEE!
SPLANG!

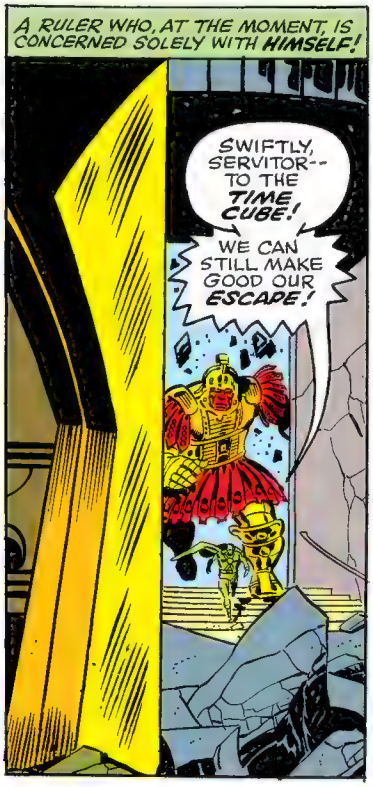
"--THEN FLY FORTH TO DISMISS THEE ENTIRE!"
PWHAMM!

THOR AND THE OTHERS ARE HOLDING THEIR OWN-- BUT THEY'LL NEVER STOP THE TIME-TWISTERS BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
I JUST CAN'T STAND BY AND WATCH ANYMORE.
THE SOUL OF A WARRIOR-GODDESS DWELLS WITHIN ME--
--AND IT'S TIME I STARTED TO ACT LIKE IT!
MILADY JANE FIGHTS LIKE A TRUE ASGARDIAN--
--BUT WHILE WE DO BATTLE, YON ALIENS MAKE GOOD THEIR ESCAPE!
'TIS TIME I PUT A STOP TO THIS SENSELESS CONFLICT--
--AS ONLY HE WHO CONTROLS THE RAGING TEMPEST CAN!
TOOM! TOOM!
TWICE ENCHANTED MJOLNIR IS STRUCK--
--AND AS LIGHTNING CRASHES SAVAGELY ABOUT THE SUDDENLY STORMSWEPT BATTLEFIELD, THE THUNDER GOD GLANCES AT JANE FOSTER-- AND FOR AN INSTANT SEES HER IN A WHOLLY DIFFERENT LIGHT--
--BUT ONLY FOR AN INSTANT!
'TWAS NAUGHT BUT A TRICK OF THE LIGHTNING, HE TRIES TO CONVINCE HIMSELF-- IT COULD HAVE BEEN NOTHING MORE.
THEN HE RETURNS TO THE RAIN-DRENCHED DONNYBROOK--
--AND, HIS COMPANIONS AT HIS SIDE, SWIFTLY ENDS IT!

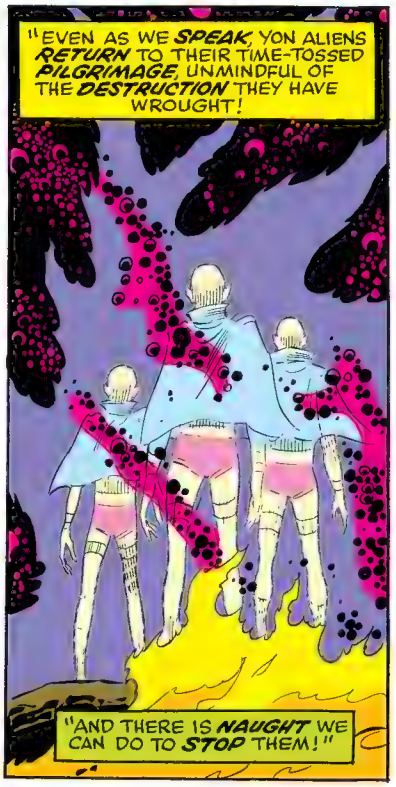

BUT HAS HE ENDED IT IN TIME?
ALIENS, STOP WHERE THOU ART--
--OR, BY ODIN, I SHALL STOP YE-- ONCE AND FOR ALL!
WORLDLING, YOU ARE BECOMING MOST TIRESOME. SIMPLY ACCEPT YOUR FATE-- AND BE DONE WITH IT.
YOU WAGED YOUR BATTLE ADMIRABLY-- BUT YOU HAVE LOST!
AN OATH ON HIS LIPS, THE THUNDER GOD VAULTS FORWARD--
--TO FIND HIS PATH SUDDENLY BARRED BY THE PAVEMENT THAT HEAVES UP BEFORE HIM.
THWAMM!
THE EARTH GROANS IN PROTEST-- AND, FOR AN INSTANT, IT SEEMS TO THOR THAT THE END OF THE WORLD IS AT HAND!
UNFORTUNATELY... HE IS RIGHT!
THE VERY STREET WRITHES BENEATH ME!
I CANNOT KEEP MY FOOTING!
IT'S THE SAME ALL AROUND US! THE TIME-TWISTERS MUST HAVE REACHED THEIR POINT OF DEPARTURE--
--AND THE COSMIC UPHEAVAL HAS BEGUN!
METHINKS I SHOULD--AH--HIE ME BACK TO OUR ALLY ZARRKO AND--ER--ALERT HIM TO THIS PERIL!
AND SO I SHALL--CAN I BUT CEASE MY STOMACH'S CHURNING!

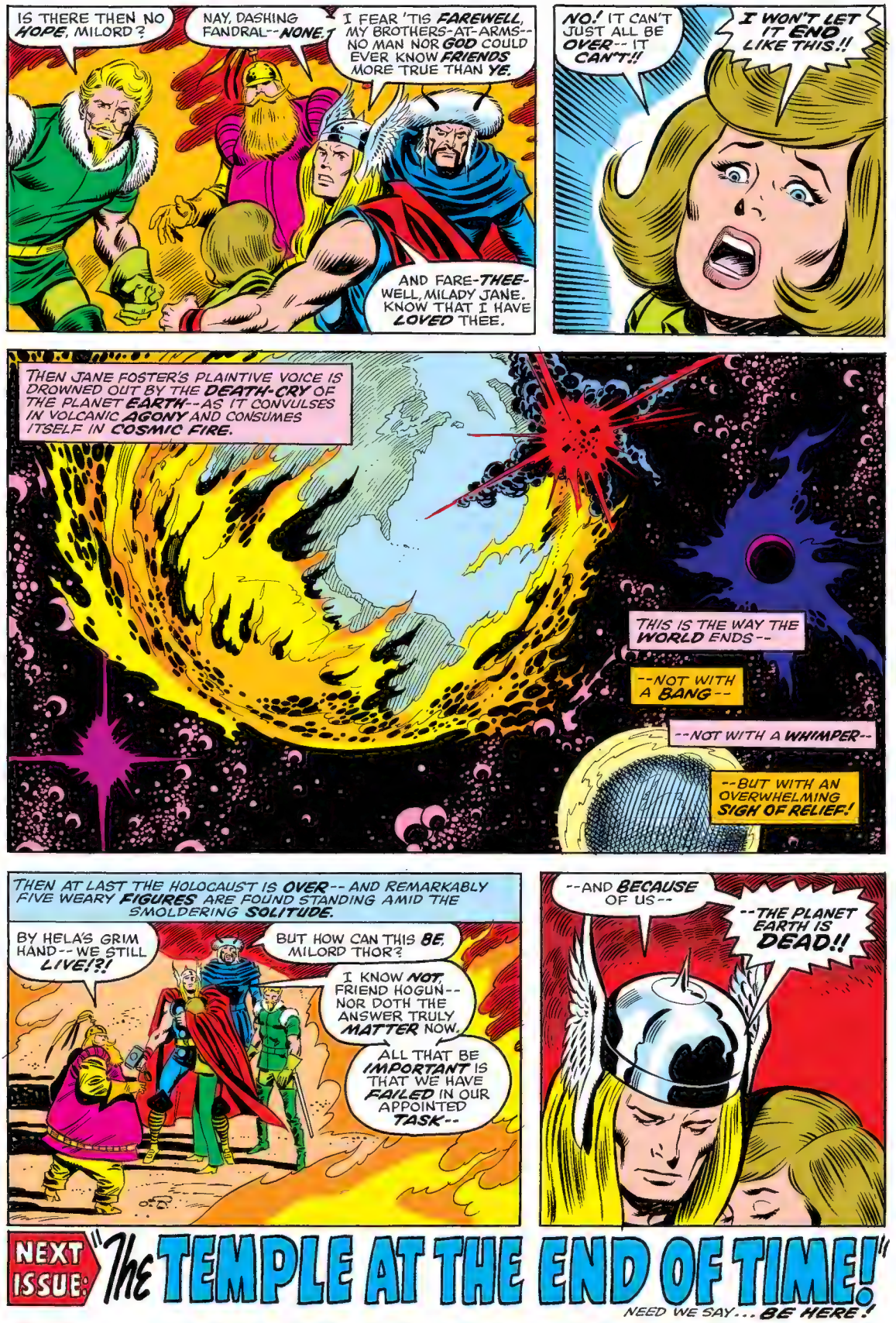

BUT ZARRKO ALREADY UNDERSTANDS THE SITUATION ALL TOO WELL!
I TRUSTED THOSE ASGARDIANS, SERVITOR-- AND THEY HAVE FAILED ME!
THERE IS ONLY ONE PATH OF ACTION LEFT OPEN TO US!
THEN LET US TAKE SAID PATH WITH HASTE, MASTER-- BEFORE THIS PALACE BECOMES OUR TOMB!


AND ALL AROUND THE PALACE, A CITY WHICH-- DEPRIVED OF ITS RESOURCES-- HAD BEEN DYING BY DEGREES, NOW PERISHES FAR MORE SWIFTLY--
--WITH A DIGNITY THAT HAD LONG BEEN DENIED IT BY HE WHO WAS ITS ABSOLUTE RULER!


A RULER WHO, AT THE MOMENT IS CONCERNED SOLELY WITH HIMSELF!
SWIFTLY, SERVITOR-- TO THE TIME CUBE!
WE CAN STILL MAKE GOOD OUR ESCAPE!

WHILE, IN THE MIDST OF THE DEVASTATION...
THE PROTECTIVE SHIELD ENCHANTED MJOLNIR HATH WOVEN ABOUT US CANNOT ENDURE FOREVER!
OUR ONLY HOPE WAS TO HALT THE ACCURSED TIME-TWISTERS--
--BUT 'TIS FAR TOO LATE FOR THAT NOW!


"EVEN AS WE SPEAK, YON ALIENS RETURN TO THEIR TIME-TOSSED PILGRIMAGE, UNMINDFUL OF THE DESTRUCTION THEY HAVE WROUGHT!
"AND THERE IS NAUGHT WE CAN DO TO STOP THEM!"


IS THERE THEN NO HOPE, MILORD?
NAY, DASHING FANDRAL--NONE.
I FEAR 'TIS FAREWELL, MY BROTHERS-AT-ARMS--NO MAN NOR GOD COULD EVER KNOW FRIENDS MORE TRUE THAN YE.
AND FARE-THEE-WELL, MILADY JANE. KNOW THAT I HAVE LOVED THEE.
NO! IT CAN'T JUST ALL BE OVER-- IT CAN'T!!
I WON'T LET IT END LIKE THIS!!
THEN JANE FOSTER'S PLAINTIVE VOICE IS DROWNED OUT BY THE DEATH-CRY OF THE PLANET EARTH--AS IT CONVULSES IN VOLCANIC AGONY AND CONSUMES ITSELF IN COSMIC FIRE.
THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD ENDS--
--NOT WITH A BANG--
--NOT WITH A WHIMPER--
--BUT WITH AN OVERWHELMING SIGH OF RELIEF!
THEN AT LAST THE HOLOCAUST IS OVER-- AND REMARKABLY FIVE WEARY FIGURES ARE FOUND STANDING AMID THE SMOLDERING SOLITUDE.
BY HELA'S GRIM HAND-- WE STILL LIVE!?!
BUT HOW CAN THIS BE, MILORD THOR?
I KNOW NOT, FRIEND HOGUN-- NOR DOTH THE ANSWER TRULY MATTER NOW.
ALL THAT BE IMPORTANT IS THAT WE HAVE FAILED IN OUR APPOINTED TASK--
--AND BECAUSE OF US--
--THE PLANET EARTH IS DEAD!!
NEXT ISSUE: "The TEMPLE AT THE END OF TIME!"
NEED WE SAY... BE HERE!

THOR
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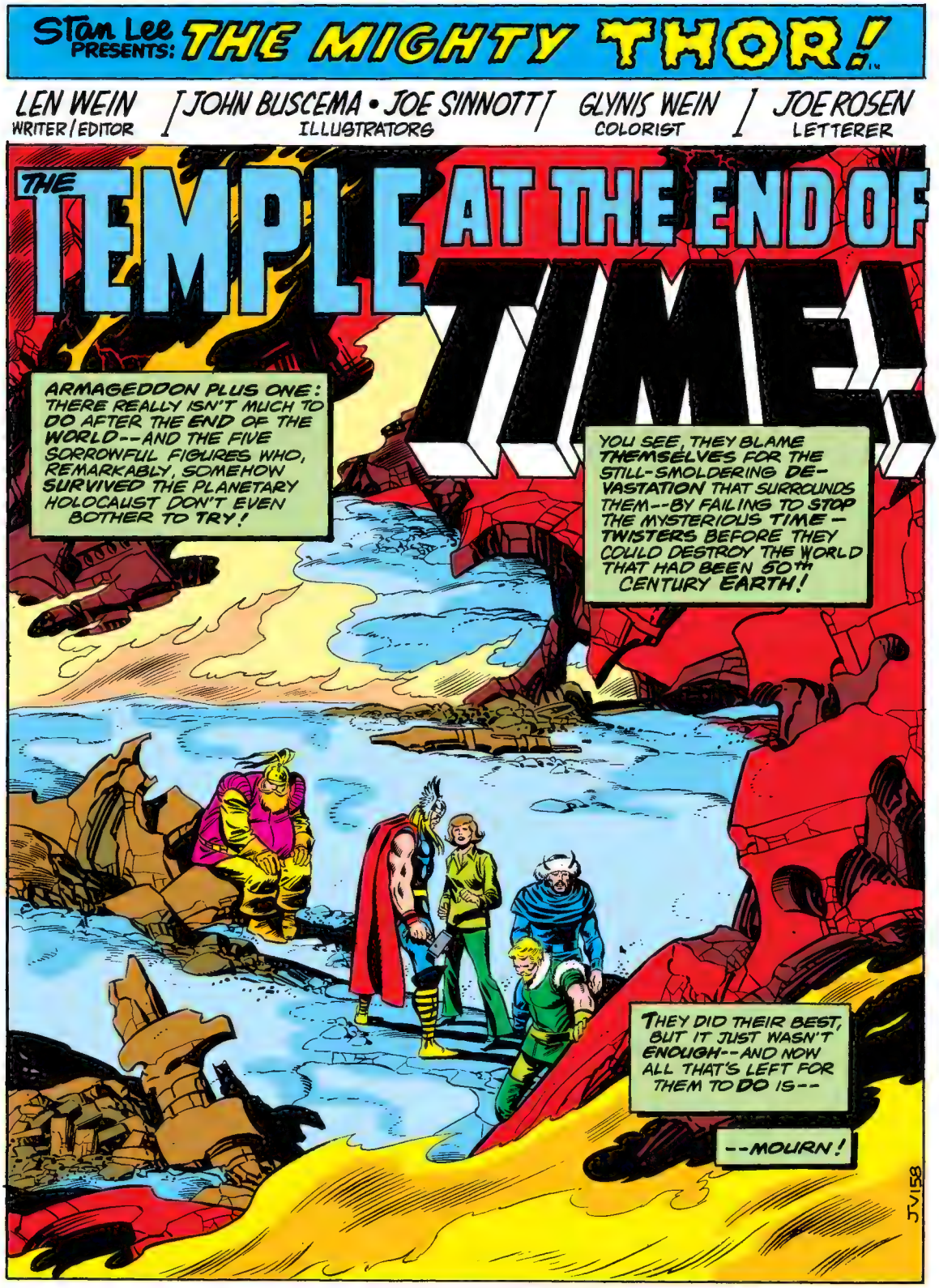
THE MIGHTY
THOR
GOD OF THUNDER VERSUS THE SERVITOR: WHILE THE UNIVERSE CRUMBLES!
THE TEMPLE AT THE END OF TIME!


Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!
LEN WEIN WRITER/EDITOR
JOHN BUSCEMA • JOE SINNOTT ILLUSTRATORS
GLYNIS WEIN COLORIST
JOE ROSEN LETTERER
THE TEMPLE AT THE END OF TIME!
ARMAGEDDON PLUS ONE: THERE REALLY ISN'T MUCH TO DO AFTER THE END OF THE WORLD--AND THE FIVE SORROWFUL FIGURES WHO, REMARKABLY, SOMEHOW SURVIVED THE PLANETARY HOLOCAUST DON'T EVEN BOTHER TO TRY!
YOU SEE, THEY BLAME THEMSELVES FOR THE STILL-SMOLDERING DEVASTATION THAT SURROUNDS THEM--BY FAILING TO STOP THE MYSTERIOUS TIME-TWISTERS BEFORE THEY COULD DESTROY THE WORLD THAT HAD BEEN 50th CENTURY EARTH!
THEY DID THEIR BEST, BUT IT JUST WASN'T ENOUGH--AND NOW ALL THAT'S LEFT FOR THEM TO DO IS--
--MOURN!
JV158

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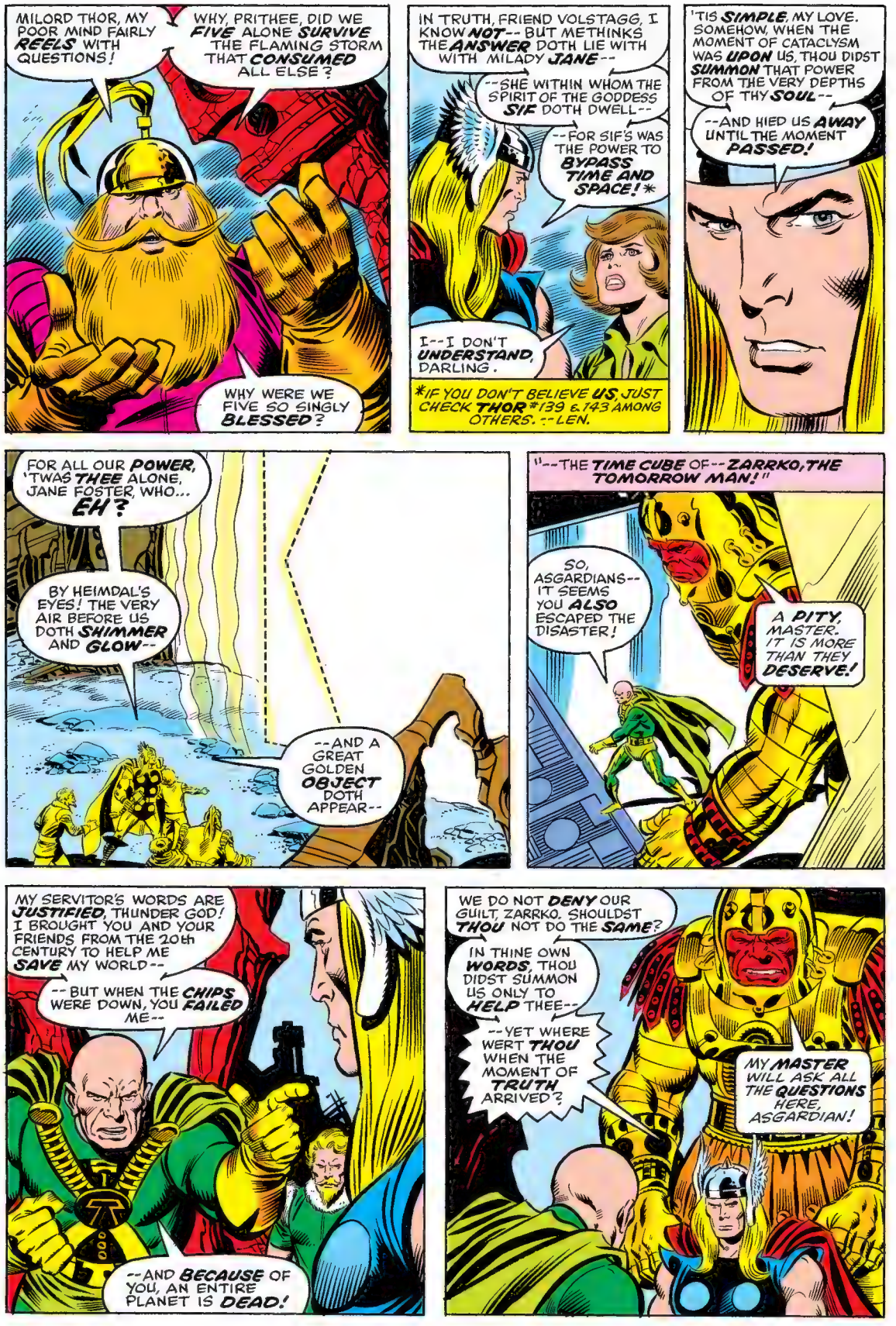
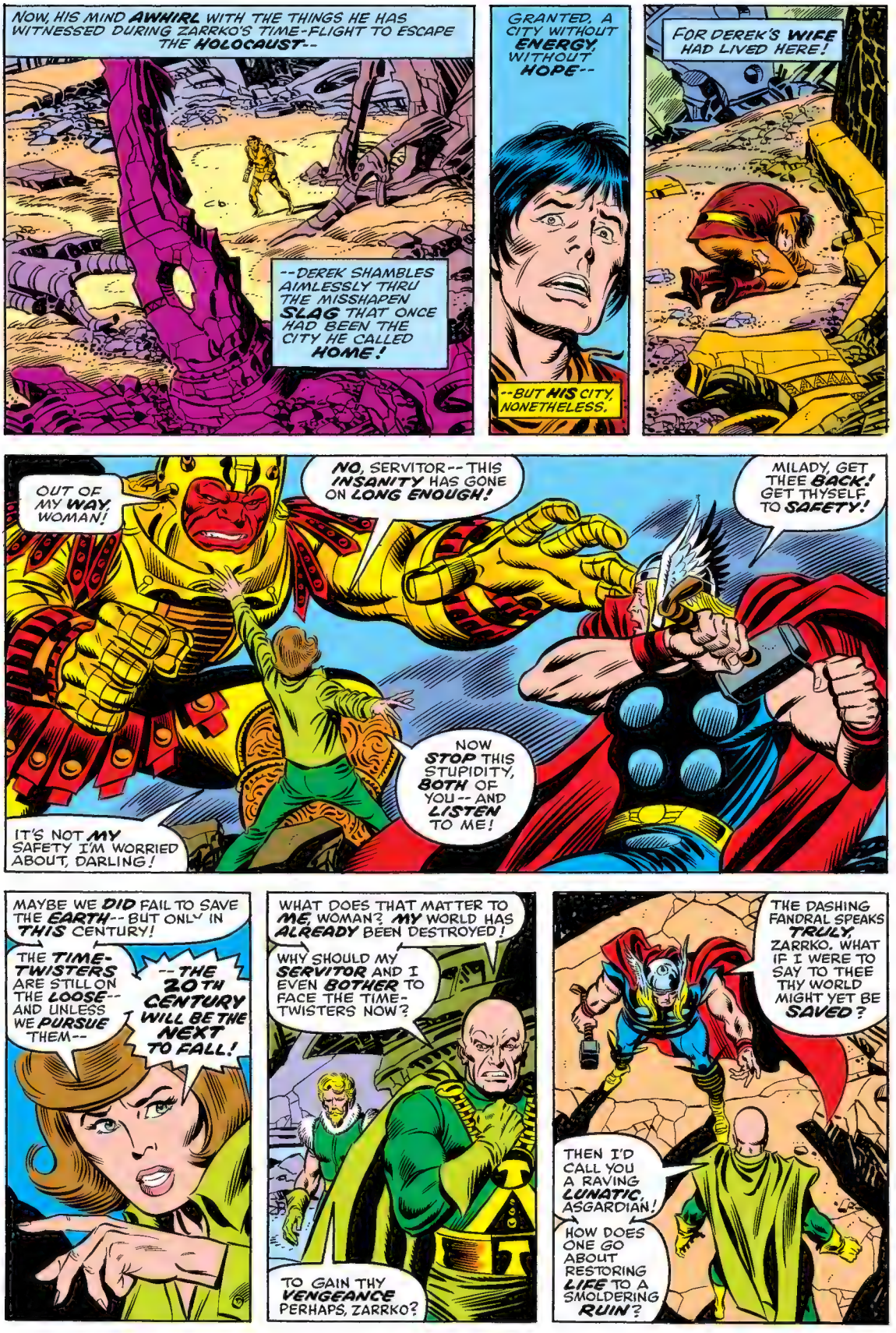
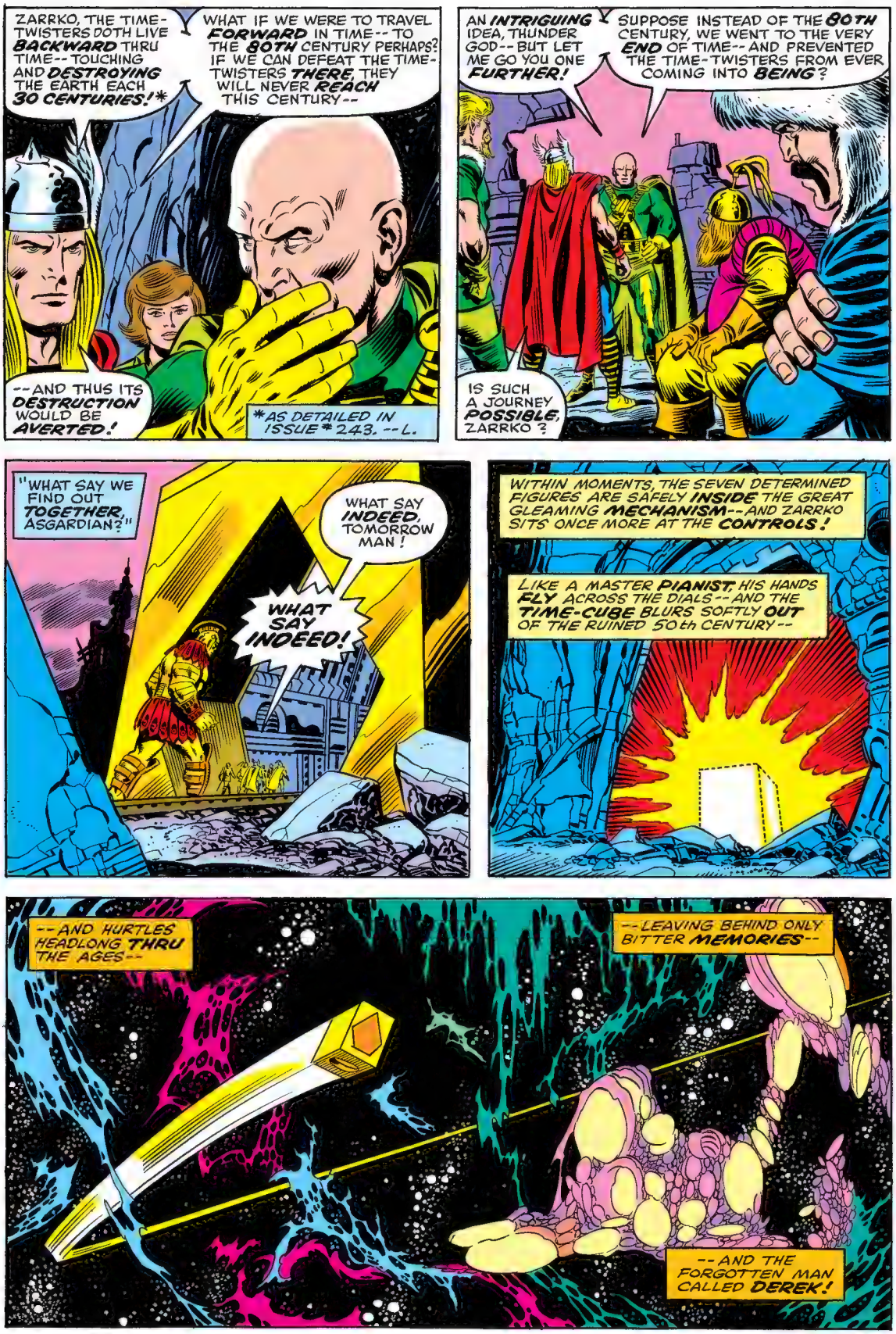
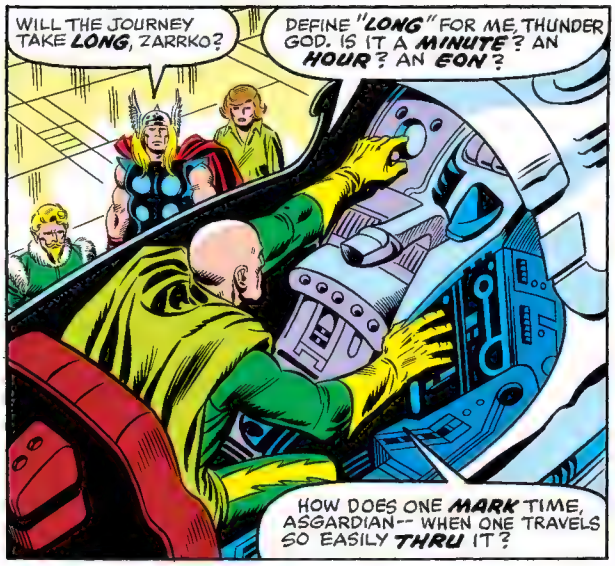

MILORD THOR, MY POOR MIND FAIRLY REELS WITH QUESTIONS!
WHY, PRITHEE, DID WE FIVE ALONE SURVIVE THE FLAMING STORM THAT CONSUMED ALL ELSE?
WHY WERE WE FIVE SO SINGLY BLESSED?
IN TRUTH, FRIEND VOLSTAGG, I KNOW NOT-- BUT METHINKS THE ANSWER DOTH LIE WITH WITH MILADY JANE--
--SHE WITHIN WHOM THE SPIRIT OF THE GODDESS SIF DOTH DWELL--
--FOR SIF'S WAS THE POWER TO BYPASS TIME AND SPACE!*
I--I DON'T UNDERSTAND, DARLING.
*IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE US, JUST CHECK THOR #139 & 143 AMONG OTHERS. --LEN.
'TIS SIMPLE, MY LOVE. SOMEHOW, WHEN THE MOMENT OF CATACLYSM WAS UPON US, THOU DIDST SUMMON THAT POWER FROM THE VERY DEPTHS OF THY SOUL--
--AND HIED US AWAY UNTIL THE MOMENT PASSED!
FOR ALL OUR POWER, 'TWAS THEE ALONE, JANE FOSTER, WHO... EH?
BY HEIMDAL'S EYES! THE VERY AIR BEFORE US DOTH SHIMMER AND GLOW--
--AND A GREAT GOLDEN OBJECT DOTH APPEAR--
"--THE TIME CUBE OF-- ZARRKO, THE TOMORROW MAN!"
SO, ASGARDIANS-- IT SEEMS YOU ALSO ESCAPED THE DISASTER!
A PITY, MASTER. IT IS MORE THAN THEY DESERVE!
MY SERVITOR'S WORDS ARE JUSTIFIED, THUNDER GOD! I BROUGHT YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS FROM THE 20th CENTURY TO HELP ME SAVE MY WORLD--
-- BUT WHEN THE CHIPS WERE DOWN, YOU FAILED ME--
--AND BECAUSE OF YOU, AN ENTIRE PLANET IS DEAD!
WE DO NOT DENY OUR GUILT, ZARRKO. SHOULDST THOU NOT DO THE SAME?
IN THINE OWN WORDS, THOU DIDST SUMMON US ONLY TO HELP THEE--
--YET WHERE WERT THOU WHEN THE MOMENT OF TRUTH ARRIVED?
MY MASTER WILL ASK ALL THE QUESTIONS HERE, ASGARDIAN!

HUHNN!!
SWOK!
ALL YOU WILL DO IS ANSWER THEM--
--OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES!
THOU HADST NO CALL TO DO THAT, SERVITOR!
I HAD LOOKED ON THEE AS AN ABLE COMRADE-IN-ARMS--MAYHAP EVEN AS A FRIEND!
BUT, IF THOU DOST CHOOSE TO SET THYSELF AGAINST ME--
-- SO BE IT!
THOU DIDST STRIKE ME FROM BEHIND--WITHOUT QUALM, WITHOUT WARNING!
"THUS SO SHALL MINE ENCHANTED HAMMER MJOLNIR STRIKE--
BWHOOM!
"--WITHOUT MERCY!"
BUT HAVING STRUCK ONCE, IT NEED STRIKE NO MORE--
--FOR I HAVE NO WISH TO BATTLE THEE, SERVITOR!
THOU DIDST STRIKE ME AND THOU WERT STRUCK IN TURN! THE SCALES ARE BALANCED!

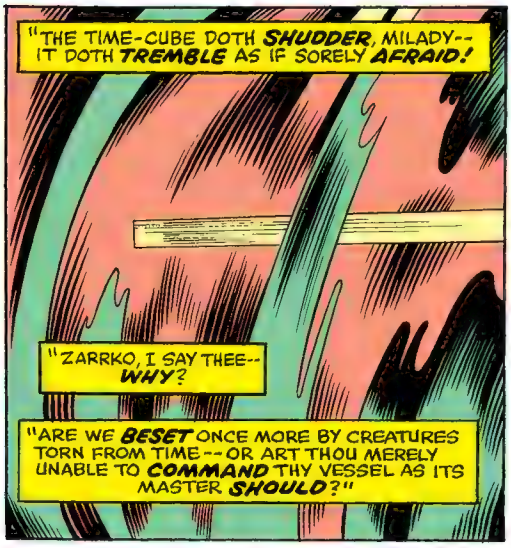
KROOM!
WRONG, THUNDER GOD! YOU HAVE SHAMED ME BEFORE MY MASTER!
THE SCALES CANNOT BE BALANCED UNTIL I HAVE WASHED THAT SHAME AWAY-- WITH YOUR BLOOD!
THEN THOU DOST LEAVE ME LITTLE CHOICE, SERVITOR!
I STRIKE NOW WITH RELUCTANCE--
PROK!
"--BUT, NONETHELESS, I STRIKE!"
ONCE BEFORE, WE CLASHED, LIKE THIS*--
--BUT THEN THY MASTER SAVED THEE!
*IN THOR # 242. -- LEN.
THIS TIME ONLY ONE OF US SHALL SURVIVE!
AND SINCE ALL EYES ARE ON THE TWO COMBAT-ANTS, NOBODY EVEN NOTICES A TATTERED FIGURE STAGGER NUMBLY FROM THE TIME CUBE--
--A FIGURE NO ONE HAD EVEN KNOWN WAS ABOARD!
HIS NAME-- NOT THAT IT REALLY MATTERS NOW-- IS DEREK! JUST BEFORE THE CATACLYSM, HE HAD STOLEN INTO ZARRKO'S CASTLE TO MAKE THE TOMORROW MAN PAY FOR THE DEATHS OF HIS FRIENDS!*
HE NEVER CAME CLOSE TO GETTING THE CHANCE!
*LAST ISSUE, RIGHT? --L.


NOW, HIS MIND AWHIRL WITH THE THINGS HE HAS WITNESSED DURING ZARRKO'S TIME-FLIGHT TO ESCAPE THE HOLOCAUST--
--DEREK SHAMBLES AIMLESSLY THRU THE MISSHAPEN SLAG THAT ONCE HAD BEEN THE CITY HE CALLED HOME!
GRANTED, A CITY WITHOUT ENERGY, WITHOUT HOPE--
--BUT HIS CITY, NONETHELESS.
FOR DEREK'S WIFE HAD LIVED HERE!
OUT OF MY WAY, WOMAN!
NO, SERVITOR--THIS INSANITY HAS GONE ON LONG ENOUGH!
MILADY, GET THEE BACK! GET THYSELF TO SAFETY!
IT'S NOT MY SAFETY I'M WORRIED ABOUT, DARLING!
NOW STOP THIS STUPIDITY, BOTH OF YOU--AND LISTEN TO ME!
MAYBE WE DID FAIL TO SAVE THE EARTH--BUT ONLY IN THIS CENTURY!
THE TIME-TWISTERS ARE STILL ON THE LOOSE--AND UNLESS WE PURSUE THEM--
--THE 20TH CENTURY WILL BE THE NEXT TO FALL!
WHAT DOES THAT MATTER TO ME, WOMAN? MY WORLD HAS ALREADY BEEN DESTROYED!
WHY SHOULD MY SERVITOR AND I EVEN BOTHER TO FACE THE TIME-TWISTERS NOW?
TO GAIN THY VENGEANCE PERHAPS, ZARRKO?
THE DASHING FANDRAL SPEAKS TRULY, ZARRKO. WHAT IF I WERE TO SAY TO THEE THY WORLD MIGHT YET BE SAVED?
THEN I'D CALL YOU A RAVING LUNATIC, ASGARDIAN!
HOW DOES ONE GO ABOUT RESTORING LIFE TO A SMOLDERING RUIN?

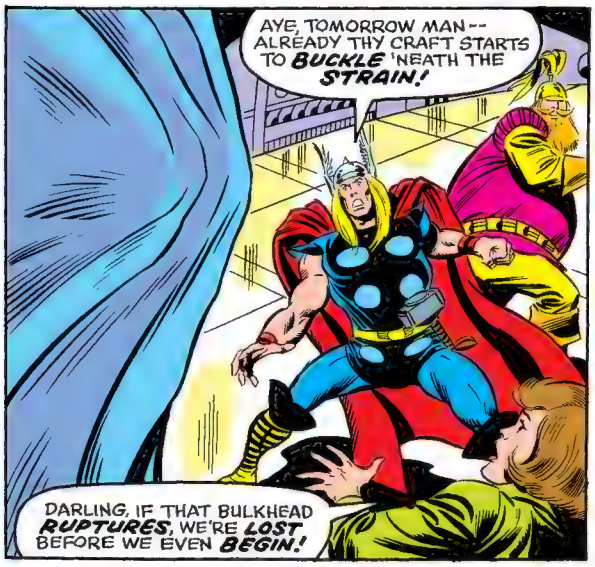

ZARRKO, THE TIME-TWISTERS DOTH LIVE BACKWARD THRU TIME--TOUCHING AND DESTROYING THE EARTH EACH 30 CENTURIES!*
WHAT IF WE WERE TO TRAVEL FORWARD IN TIME--TO THE 80TH CENTURY PERHAPS? IF WE CAN DEFEAT THE TIME-TWISTERS THERE, THEY WILL NEVER REACH THIS CENTURY--
--AND THUS ITS DESTRUCTION WOULD BE AVERTED!
*AS DETAILED IN ISSUE #243. --L.
AN INTRIGUING IDEA, THUNDER GOD--BUT LET ME GO YOU ONE FURTHER!
SUPPOSE INSTEAD OF THE 80TH CENTURY, WE WENT TO THE VERY END OF TIME--AND PREVENTED THE TIME-TWISTERS FROM EVER COMING INTO BEING?
IS SUCH A JOURNEY POSSIBLE, ZARRKO?
"WHAT SAY WE FIND OUT TOGETHER, ASGARDIAN?"
WHAT SAY INDEED, TOMORROW MAN!
WHAT SAY INDEED!
WITHIN MOMENTS, THE SEVEN DETERMINED FIGURES ARE SAFELY INSIDE THE GREAT GLEAMING MECHANISM--AND ZARRKO SITS ONCE MORE AT THE CONTROLS!
LIKE A MASTER PIANIST, HIS HANDS FLY ACROSS THE DIALS--AND THE TIME-CUBE BLURS SOFTLY OUT OF THE RUINED 50th CENTURY--
--AND HURTLES HEADLONG THRU THE AGES--
--LEAVING BEHIND ONLY BITTER MEMORIES--
--AND THE FORGOTTEN MAN CALLED DEREK!


WILL THE JOURNEY TAKE LONG, ZARRKO?
DEFINE "LONG" FOR ME, THUNDER GOD. IS IT A MINUTE? AN HOUR? AN EON?
HOW DOES ONE MARK TIME, ASGARDIAN-- WHEN ONE TRAVELS SO EASILY THRU IT?

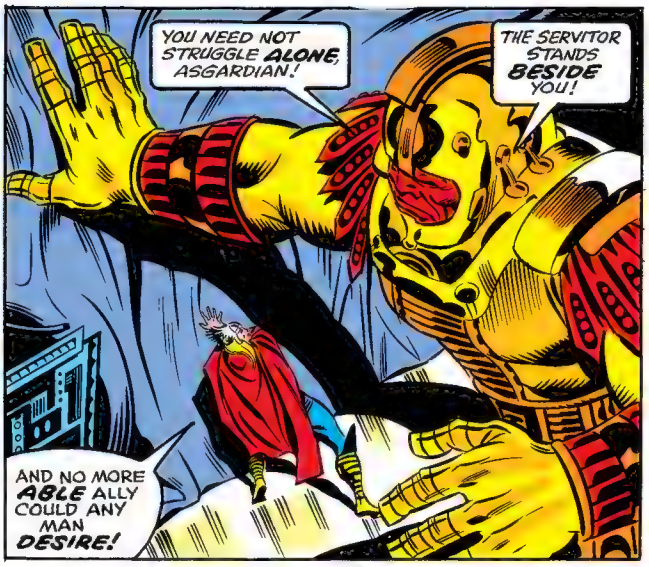
THINE IMPERIOUS TONE IS UNNECESSARY, ZARRKO! 'TWAS A SIMPLE ENOUGH QUESTION TO...
ZOUNDS!
DARLING, WH-WHAT'S HAPPENING?

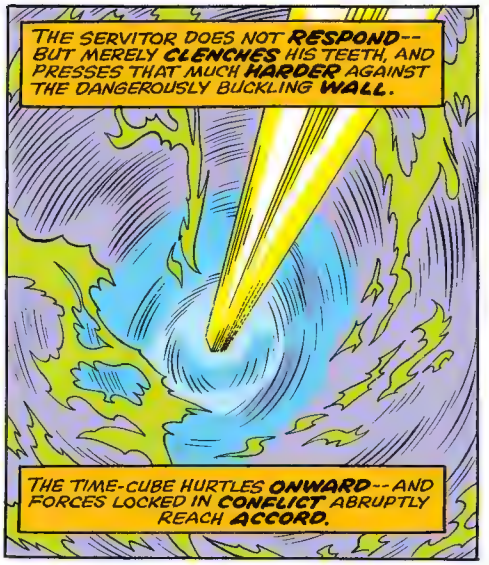

"THE TIME-CUBE DOTH SHUDDER, MILADY-- IT DOTH TREMBLE AS IF SORELY AFRAID!
"ZARRKO, I SAY THEE-- WHY?
"ARE WE BESET ONCE MORE BY CREATURES TORN FROM TIME-- OR ART THOU MERELY UNABLE TO COMMAND THY VESSEL AS ITS MASTER SHOULD?"

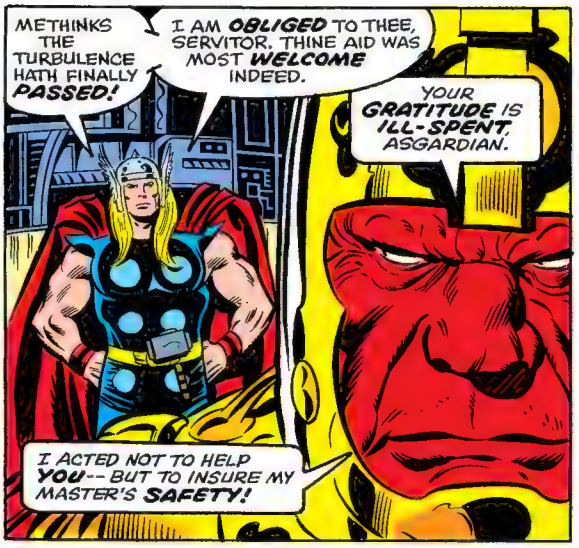
THIS IS BEYOND MY POWER TO CONTROL, THOR! I'VE NEVER PUSHED THE TIME-CUBE THIS HARD BEFORE!
IT'S BEING BUFFETED BY FORCES WE COULD NOT BEGIN TO COMPREHEND!

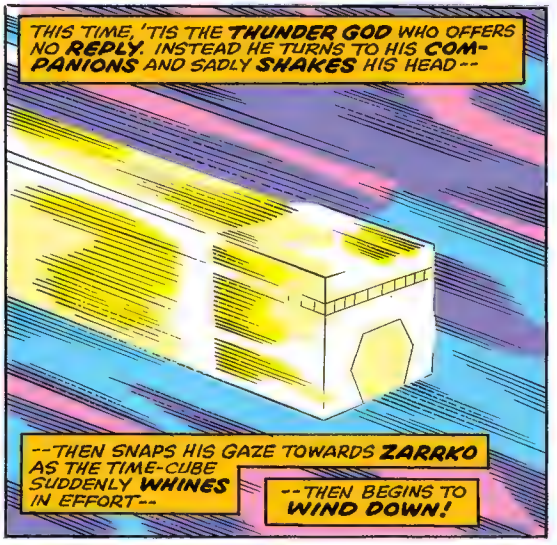

AYE, TOMORROW MAN-- ALREADY THY CRAFT STARTS TO BUCKLE 'NEATH THE STRAIN!
DARLING, IF THAT BULKHEAD RUPTURES, WE'RE LOST BEFORE WE EVEN BEGIN!

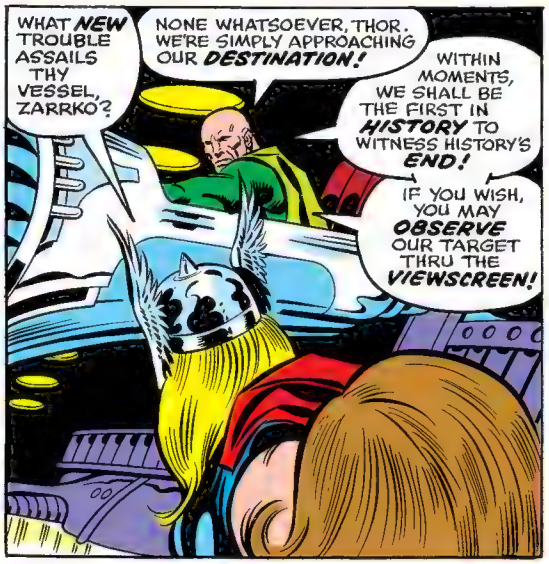
FEAR NOT, MILADY-- THE WALL SHALL STAND!
IN THE NAME OF ALL THAT HATH EVER BEEN AND ALL THAT MAY EVER BE-- IT SHALL STAND!

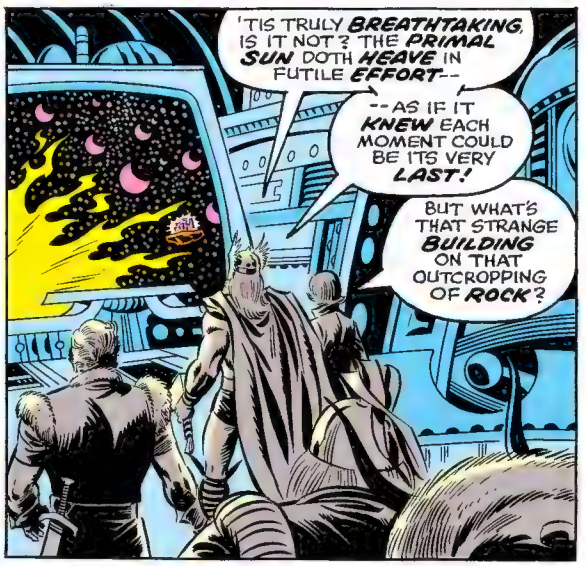

YOU NEED NOT STRUGGLE ALONE, ASGARDIAN!
THE SERVITOR STANDS BESIDE YOU!
AND NO MORE ABLE ALLY COULD ANY MAN DESIRE!

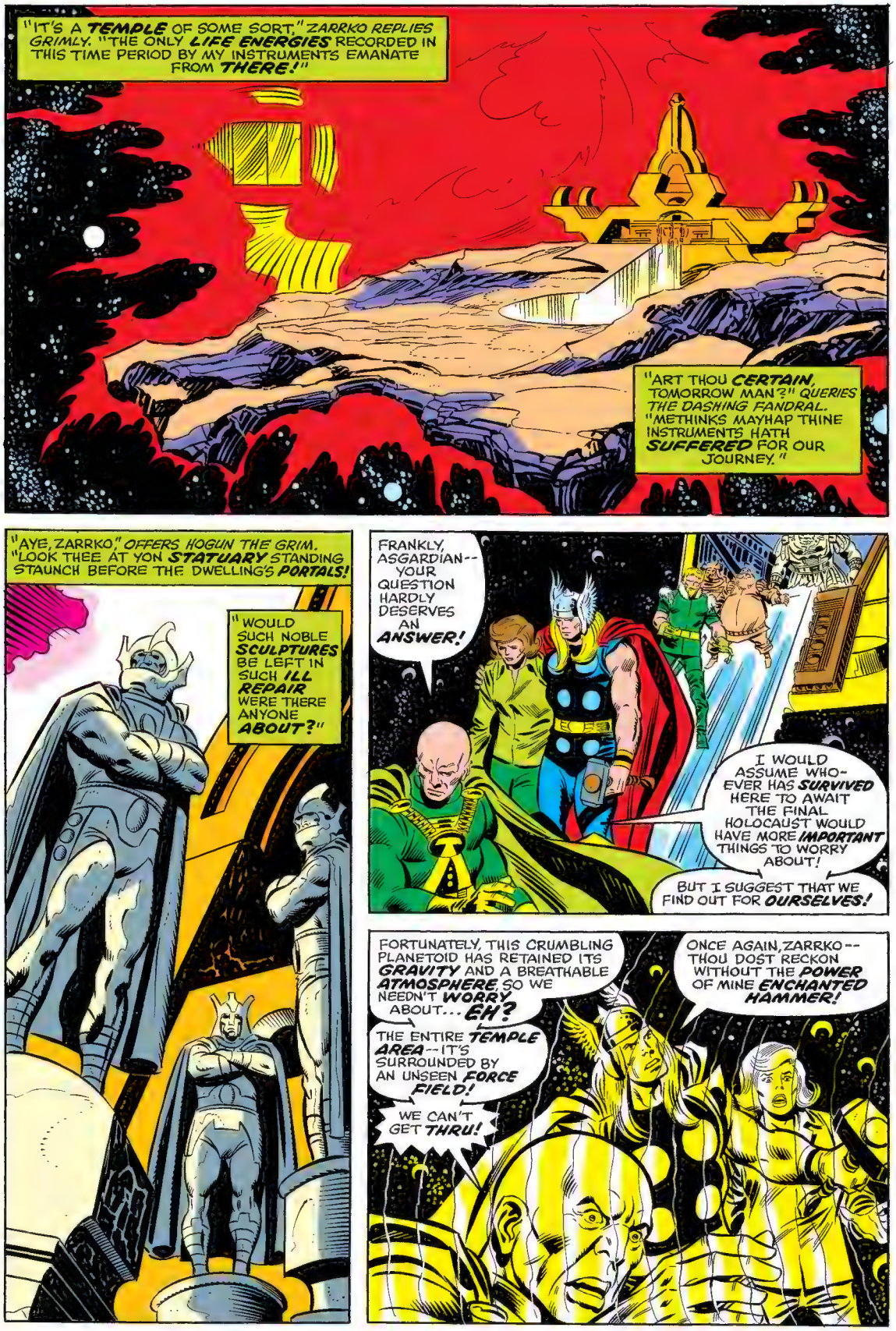

THE SERVITOR DOES NOT RESPOND-- BUT MERELY CLENCHES HIS TEETH, AND PRESSES THAT MUCH HARDER AGAINST THE DANGEROUSLY BUCKLING WALL.
THE TIME-CUBE HURTLES ONWARD--AND FORCES LOCKED IN CONFLICT ABRUPTLY REACH ACCORD.

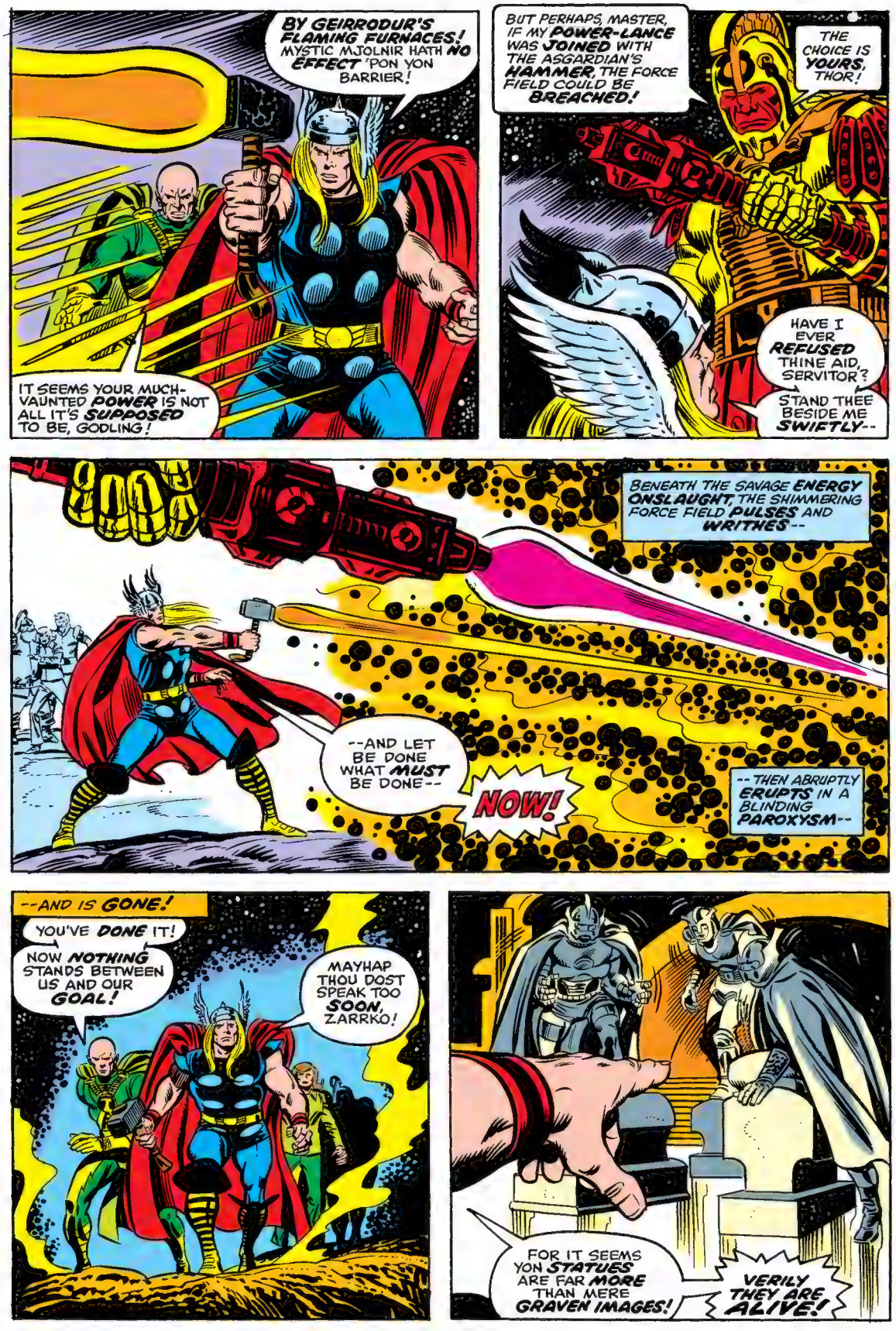

METHINKS THE TURBULENCE HATH FINALLY PASSED!
I AM OBLIGED TO THEE, SERVITOR. THINE AID WAS MOST WELCOME INDEED.
YOUR GRATITUDE IS ILL-SPENT, ASGARDIAN.
I ACTED NOT TO HELP YOU-- BUT TO INSURE MY MASTER'S SAFETY!

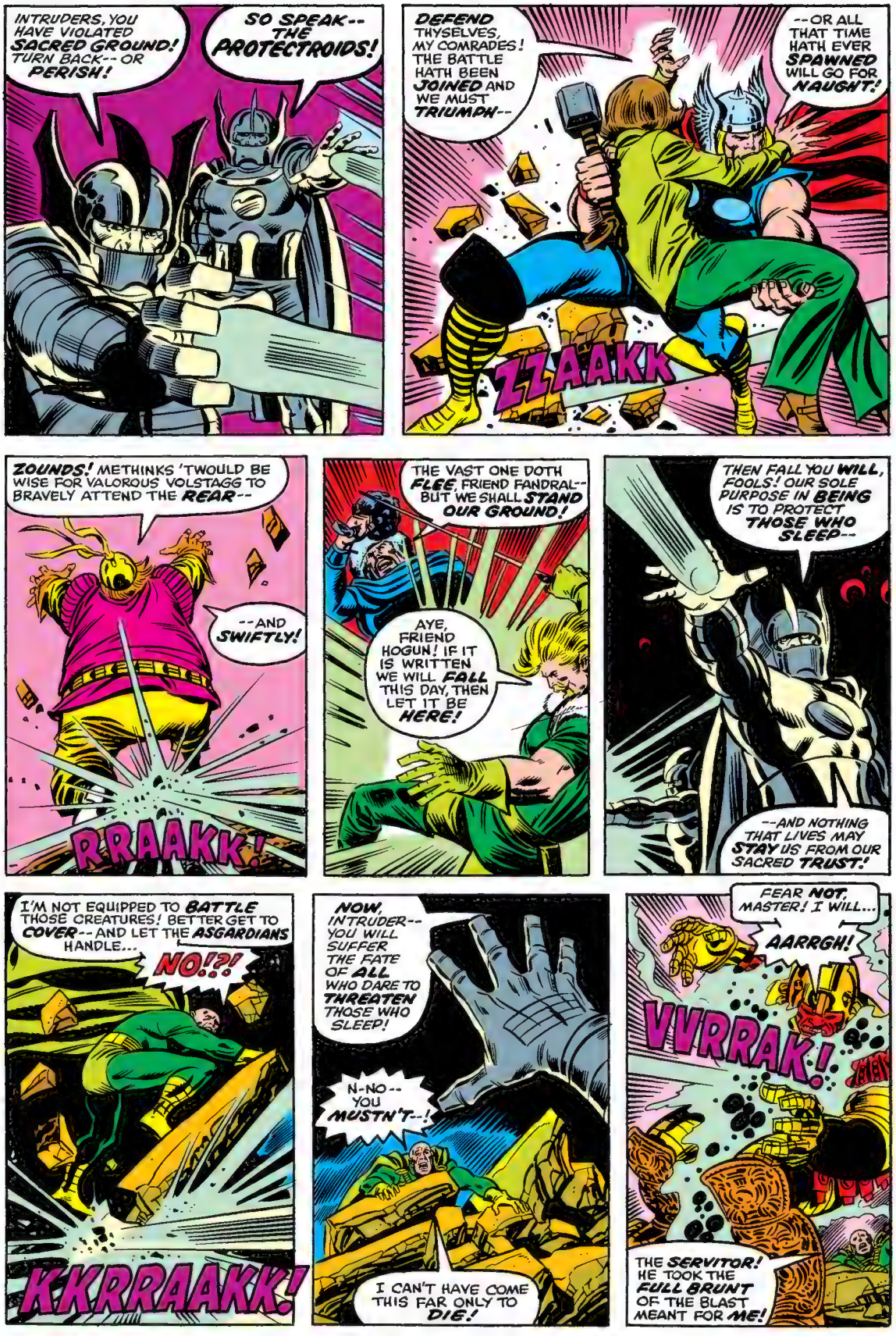

THIS TIME, 'TIS THE THUNDER GOD WHO OFFERS NO REPLY. INSTEAD HE TURNS TO HIS COMPANIONS AND SADLY SHAKES HIS HEAD--
--THEN SNAPS HIS GAZE TOWARDS ZARRKO AS THE TIME-CUBE SUDDENLY WHINES IN EFFORT--
--THEN BEGINS TO WIND DOWN!


WHAT NEW TROUBLE ASSAILS THY VESSEL, ZARRKO?
NONE WHATSOEVER, THOR. WE'RE SIMPLY APPROACHING OUR DESTINATION!
WITHIN MOMENTS, WE SHALL BE THE FIRST IN HISTORY TO WITNESS HISTORY'S END!
IF YOU WISH, YOU MAY OBSERVE OUR TARGET THRU THE VIEWSCREEN!

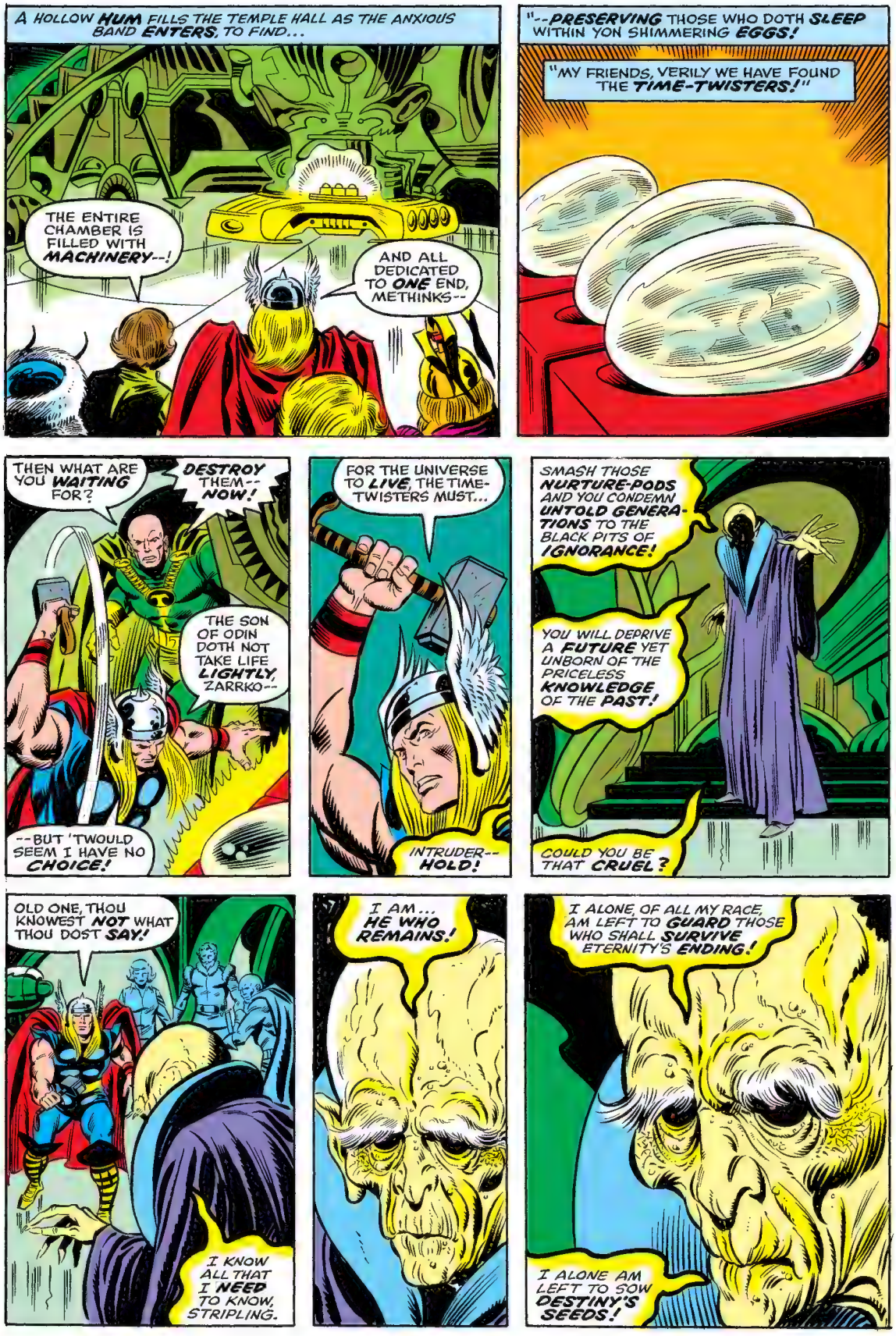

'TIS TRULY BREATHTAKING, IS IT NOT? THE PRIMAL SUN DOTH HEAVE IN FUTILE EFFORT--
--AS IF IT KNEW EACH MOMENT COULD BE ITS VERY LAST!
BUT WHAT'S THAT STRANGE BUILDING ON THAT OUTCROPPING OF ROCK?

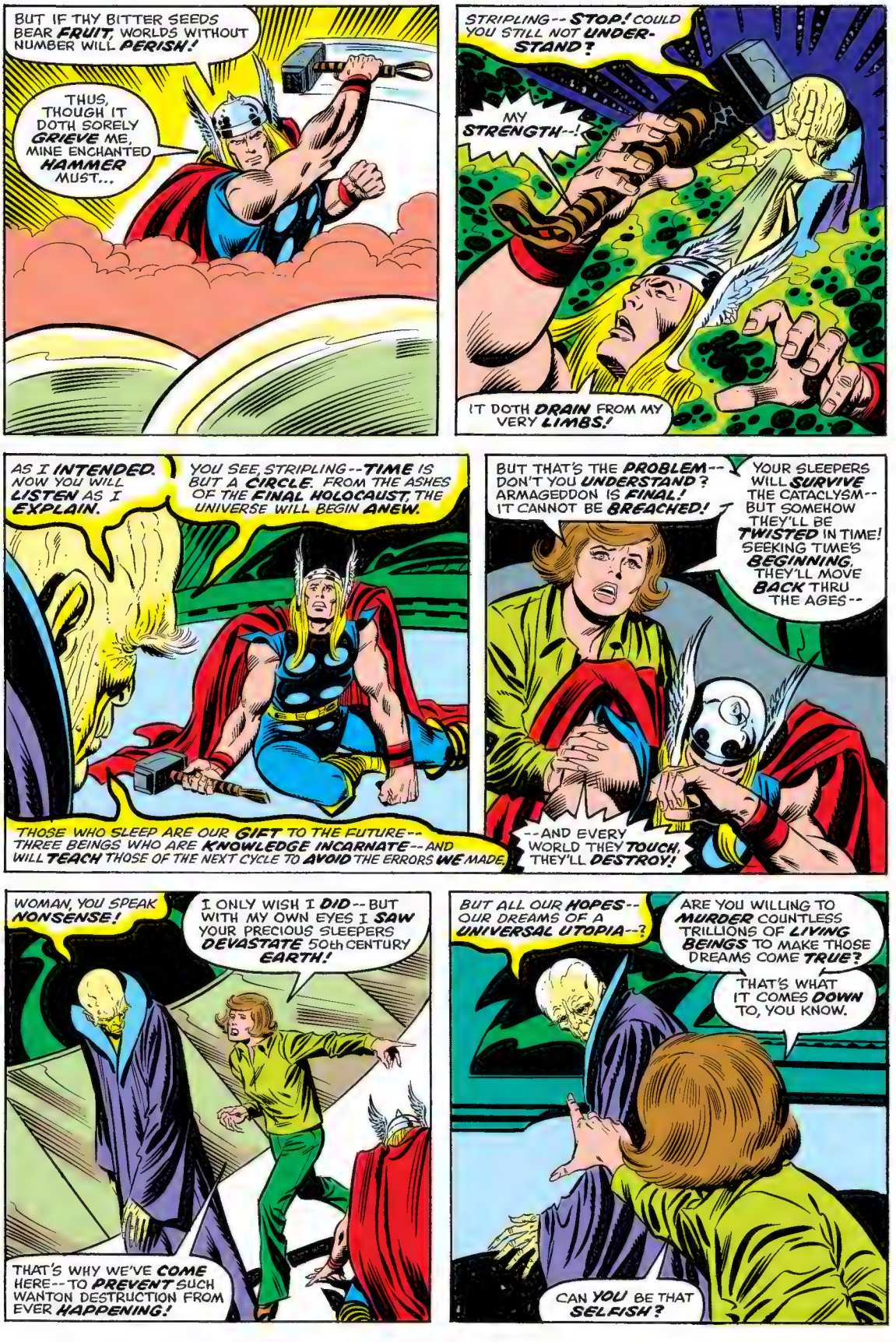

"IT'S A TEMPLE OF SOME SORT," ZARRKO REPLIES GRIMLY. "THE ONLY LIFE ENERGIES RECORDED IN THIS TIME PERIOD BY MY INSTRUMENTS EMANATE FROM THERE!"
"ART THOU CERTAIN, TOMORROW MAN?" QUERIES THE DASHING FANDRAL. "METHINKS MAYHAP THINE INSTRUMENTS HATH SUFFERED FOR OUR JOURNEY."
"AYE, ZARRKO," OFFERS HOGUN THE GRIM. "LOOK THEE AT YON STATUARY STANDING STAUNCH BEFORE THE DWELLING'S PORTALS!
"WOULD SUCH NOBLE SCULPTURES BE LEFT IN SUCH ILL REPAIR WERE THERE ANYONE ABOUT?"
FRANKLY, ASGARDIAN-- YOUR QUESTION HARDLY DESERVES AN ANSWER!
I WOULD ASSUME WHO-EVER HAS SURVIVED HERE TO AWAIT THE FINAL HOLOCAUST WOULD HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT!
BUT I SUGGEST THAT WE FIND OUT FOR OURSELVES!
FORTUNATELY, THIS CRUMBLING PLANETOID HAS RETAINED ITS GRAVITY AND A BREATHABLE ATMOSPHERE, SO WE NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT... EH?
THE ENTIRE TEMPLE AREA--IT'S SURROUNDED BY AN UNSEEN FORCE FIELD!
WE CAN'T GET THRU!
ONCE AGAIN, ZARRKO-- THOU DOST RECKON WITHOUT THE POWER OF MINE ENCHANTED HAMMER!

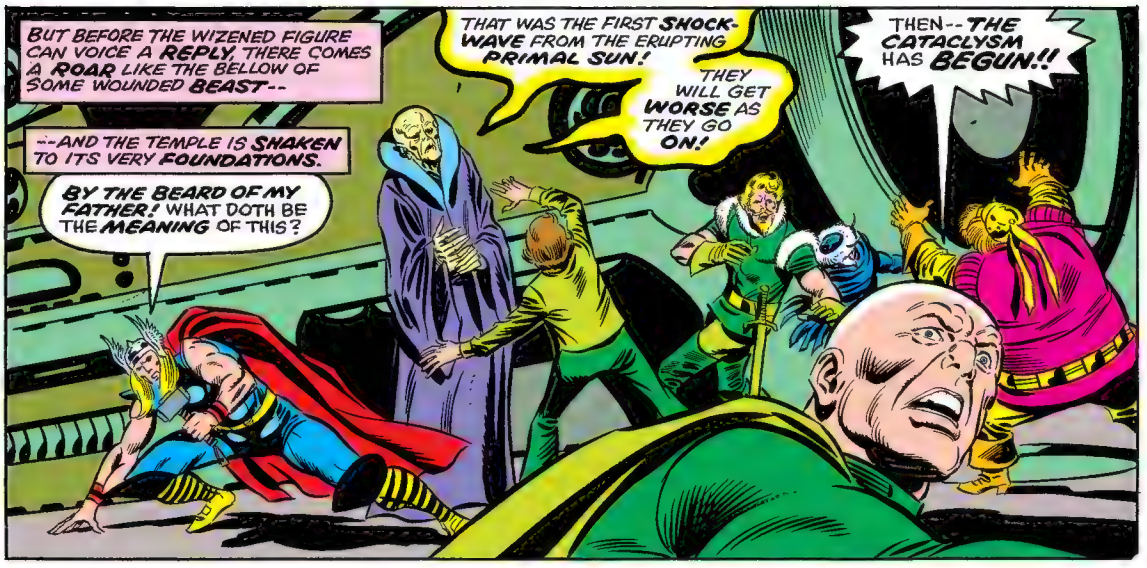

BY GEIRRODUR'S FLAMING FURNACES! MYSTIC MJOLNIR HATH NO EFFECT 'PON YON BARRIER!
IT SEEMS YOUR MUCH-VAUNTED POWER IS NOT ALL IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE, GODLING!
BUT PERHAPS, MASTER, IF MY POWER-LANCE WAS JOINED WITH THE ASGARDIAN'S HAMMER, THE FORCE FIELD COULD BE BREACHED!
THE CHOICE IS YOURS, THOR!
HAVE I EVER REFUSED THINE AID, SERVITOR?
STAND THEE BESIDE ME SWIFTLY--
BENEATH THE SAVAGE ENERGY ONSLAUGHT, THE SHIMMERING FORCE FIELD PULSES AND WRITHES--
--AND LET BE DONE WHAT MUST BE DONE--
NOW!
--THEN ABRUPTLY ERUPTS IN A BLINDING PAROXYSM--
--AND IS GONE!
YOU'VE DONE IT!
NOW NOTHING STANDS BETWEEN US AND OUR GOAL!
MAYHAP THOU DOST SPEAK TOO SOON, ZARRKO!
FOR IT SEEMS YON STATUES ARE FAR MORE THAN MERE GRAVEN IMAGES!
VERILY THEY ARE ALIVE!


INTRUDERS, YOU HAVE VIOLATED SACRED GROUND! TURN BACK-- OR PERISH!
SO SPEAK-- THE PROTECTROIDS!
DEFEND THYSELVES, MY COMRADES! THE BATTLE HATH BEEN JOINED AND WE MUST TRIUMPH--
--OR ALL THAT TIME HATH EVER SPAWNED WILL GO FOR NAUGHT!
ZZAAKK
ZOUNDS! METHINKS 'TWOULD BE WISE FOR VALOROUS VOLSTAGG TO BRAVELY ATTEND THE REAR--
--AND SWIFTLY!
RRAAKK!
THE VAST ONE DOTH FLEE, FRIEND FANDRAL-- BUT WE SHALL STAND OUR GROUND!
AYE, FRIEND HOGUN! IF IT IS WRITTEN WE WILL FALL THIS DAY, THEN LET IT BE HERE!
THEN FALL YOU WILL, FOOLS! OUR SOLE PURPOSE IN BEING IS TO PROTECT THOSE WHO SLEEP--
--AND NOTHING THAT LIVES MAY STAY US FROM OUR SACRED TRUST!
I'M NOT EQUIPPED TO BATTLE THOSE CREATURES! BETTER GET TO COVER-- AND LET THE ASGARDIANS HANDLE...
NO!?!
KKRRAAKK!
NOW, INTRUDER-- YOU WILL SUFFER THE FATE OF ALL WHO DARE TO THREATEN THOSE WHO SLEEP!
N-NO-- YOU MUSTN'T--!
I CAN'T HAVE COME THIS FAR ONLY TO DIE!
FEAR NOT, MASTER! I WILL...
AARRGH!
VVRRAK!
THE SERVITOR! HE TOOK THE FULL BRUNT OF THE BLAST MEANT FOR ME!

"HIS INNER CIRCUITRY IS ALL BUT DESTROYED-- YET STILL HE MOVES TO DEFEND ME--!
"HE'S ATTACKING THE PROTECTROID-- WASTING HIS LAST IOTA OF ENERGY ON MY BEHALF--
"--STRAINING HIMSELF TO THE POINT OF SELF-DESTRUCTION--
KWA-VOOM!
"--AND BEYOND!"
BUT THY SERVITOR'S SACRIFICE HATH NOT BEEN IN VAIN, ZARRKO!
HIS NOBLE DEED HATH DISTRACTED THE REMAINING PROTECTROIDS--
KKRAK!
SKRAK!
--AND E'ER THEY CAN REGAIN THEIR WITS--
--MINE AVENGING HAMMER DOTH STRIKE!
COME, ZARRKO-- THERE IS NOTHING MORE WE CAN DO HERE.
HE WAS MORE THAN JUST MY SERVANT, ASGARDIAN.
THY SERVANT HATH PASSED BEYOND OUR POWER TO ATTEND HIM!
HE WAS... MY FRIEND.
THEN JOIN US, ZARRKO-- AND HELP TO MAKE WHAT NEXT WE DO A SHRINE TO THY COMRADE'S MEMORY!
THE SERVITOR HATH GIVEN US HIS LAST FULL MEASURE OF DEVOTION.
'TIS UP TO US TO DO WHAT REMAINS!


A HOLLOW HUM FILLS THE TEMPLE HALL AS THE ANXIOUS BAND ENTERS, TO FIND...
THE ENTIRE CHAMBER IS FILLED WITH MACHINERY--!
AND ALL DEDICATED TO ONE END, METHINKS--
"--PRESERVING THOSE WHO DOTH SLEEP WITHIN YON SHIMMERING EGGS!
"MY FRIENDS, VERILY WE HAVE FOUND THE TIME-TWISTERS!"
THEN WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
DESTROY THEM-- NOW!
THE SON OF ODIN DOTH NOT TAKE LIFE LIGHTLY, ZARRKO--
--BUT 'TWOULD SEEM I HAVE NO CHOICE!
FOR THE UNIVERSE TO LIVE, THE TIME-TWISTERS MUST...
INTRUDER-- HOLD!
SMASH THOSE NURTURE-PODS AND YOU CONDEMN UNTOLD GENERATIONS TO THE BLACK PITS OF IGNORANCE!
YOU WILL DEPRIVE A FUTURE YET UNBORN OF THE PRICELESS KNOWLEDGE OF THE PAST!
COULD YOU BE THAT CRUEL?
OLD ONE, THOU KNOWEST NOT WHAT THOU DOST SAY!
I KNOW ALL THAT I NEED TO KNOW, STRIPLING.
I AM... HE WHO REMAINS!
I ALONE, OF ALL MY RACE, AM LEFT TO GUARD THOSE WHO SHALL SURVIVE ETERNITY'S ENDING!
I ALONE AM LEFT TO SOW DESTINY'S SEEDS!

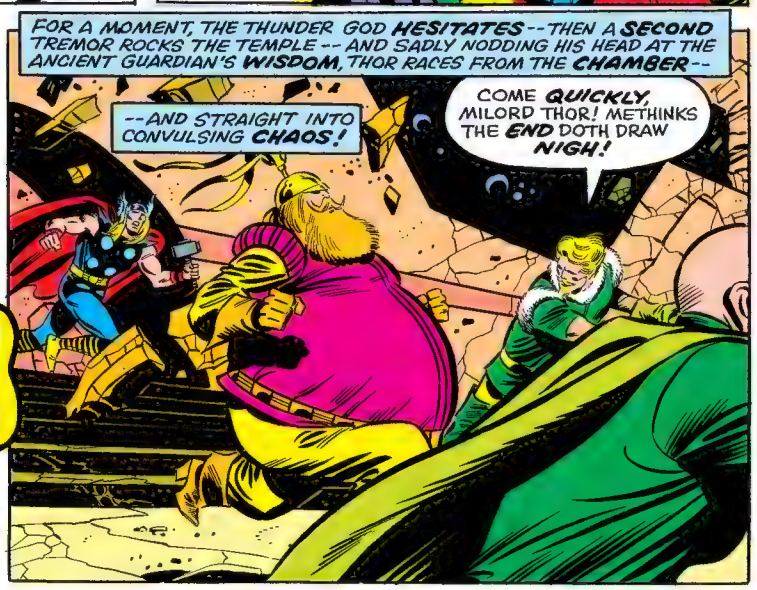

BUT IF THY BITTER SEEDS BEAR FRUIT, WORLDS WITHOUT NUMBER WILL PERISH!
THUS, THOUGH IT DOTH SORELY GRIEVE ME, MINE ENCHANTED HAMMER MUST...
STRIPLING-- STOP! COULD YOU STILL NOT UNDER-STAND?
MY STRENGTH--!
IT DOTH DRAIN FROM MY VERY LIMBS!
AS I INTENDED. NOW YOU WILL LISTEN AS I EXPLAIN.
YOU SEE, STRIPLING--TIME IS BUT A CIRCLE. FROM THE ASHES OF THE FINAL HOLOCAUST, THE UNIVERSE WILL BEGIN ANEW.
THOSE WHO SLEEP ARE OUR GIFT TO THE FUTURE-- THREE BEINGS WHO ARE KNOWLEDGE INCARNATE-- AND WILL TEACH THOSE OF THE NEXT CYCLE TO AVOID THE ERRORS WE MADE.
BUT THAT'S THE PROBLEM-- DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? ARMAGEDDON IS FINAL! IT CANNOT BE BREACHED!
YOUR SLEEPERS WILL SURVIVE THE CATACLYSM-- BUT SOMEHOW THEY'LL BE TWISTED IN TIME! SEEKING TIME'S BEGINNING, THEY'LL MOVE BACK THRU THE AGES--
--AND EVERY WORLD THEY TOUCH, THEY'LL DESTROY!
WOMAN, YOU SPEAK NONSENSE!
I ONLY WISH I DID-- BUT WITH MY OWN EYES I SAW YOUR PRECIOUS SLEEPERS DEVASTATE 50th CENTURY EARTH!
THAT'S WHY WE'VE COME HERE--TO PREVENT SUCH WANTON DESTRUCTION FROM EVER HAPPENING!
BUT ALL OUR HOPES-- OUR DREAMS OF A UNIVERSAL UTOPIA--?
ARE YOU WILLING TO MURDER COUNTLESS TRILLIONS OF LIVING BEINGS TO MAKE THOSE DREAMS COME TRUE?
THAT'S WHAT IT COMES DOWN TO, YOU KNOW.
CAN YOU BE THAT SELFISH?

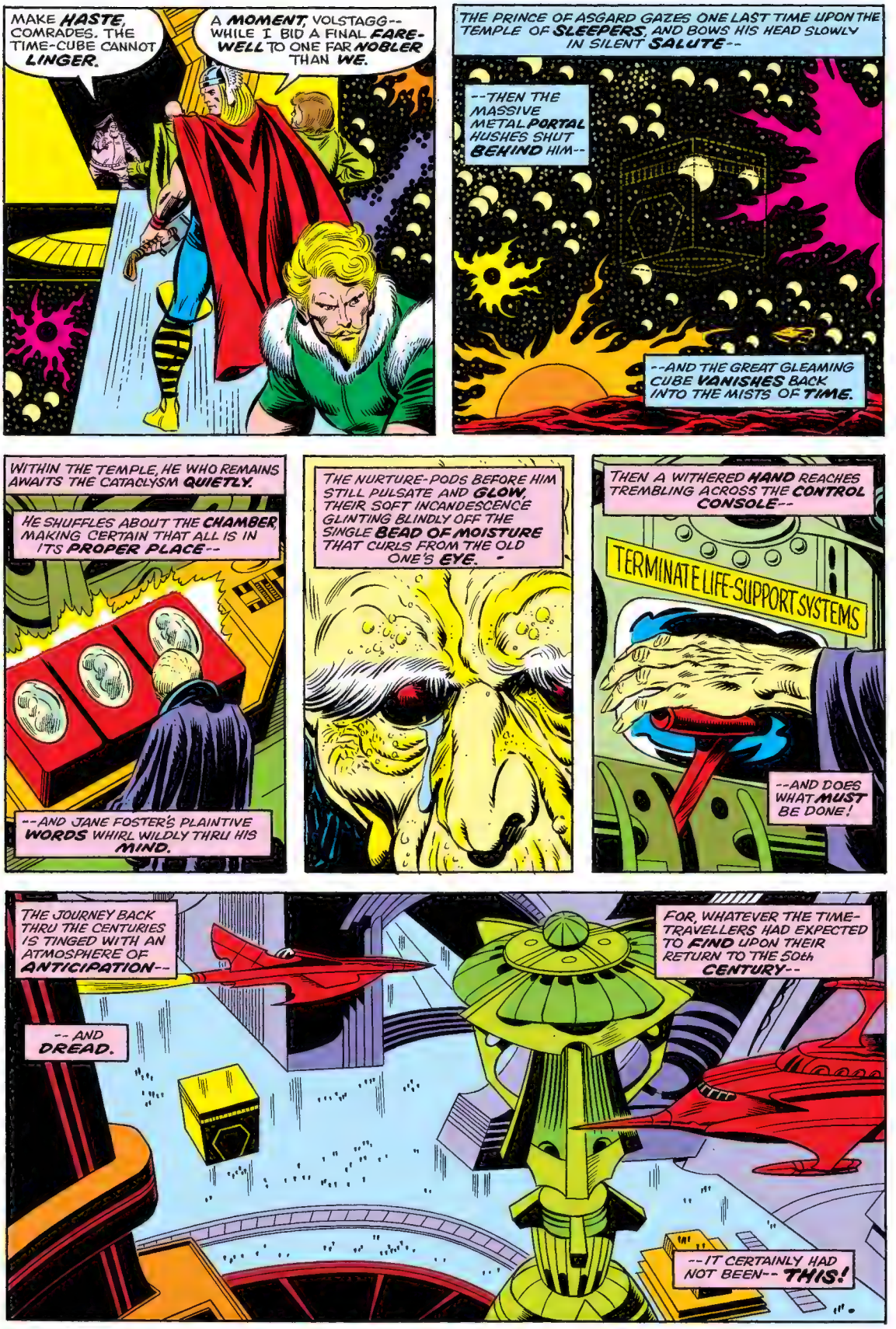

BUT BEFORE THE WIZENED FIGURE CAN VOICE A REPLY, THERE COMES A ROAR LIKE THE BELLOW OF SOME WOUNDED BEAST--
--AND THE TEMPLE IS SHAKEN TO ITS VERY FOUNDATIONS.
BY THE BEARD OF MY FATHER! WHAT DOTH BE THE MEANING OF THIS?
THAT WAS THE FIRST SHOCK-WAVE FROM THE ERUPTING PRIMAL SUN!
THEY WILL GET WORSE AS THEY GO ON!
THEN--THE CATACLYSM HAS BEGUN!!

QUICKLY, EVERY-ONE--TO THE TIME-CUBE! IT'S OUR ONLY HOPE OF LEAVING HERE ALIVE!
WE DO NOT LIKE LEAVING HERE ZARRKO--WITH OUR MISSION NOT YET COMPLETE!
BUT NONETHELESS, TOMORROW MAN--WE GO!
WE GO!

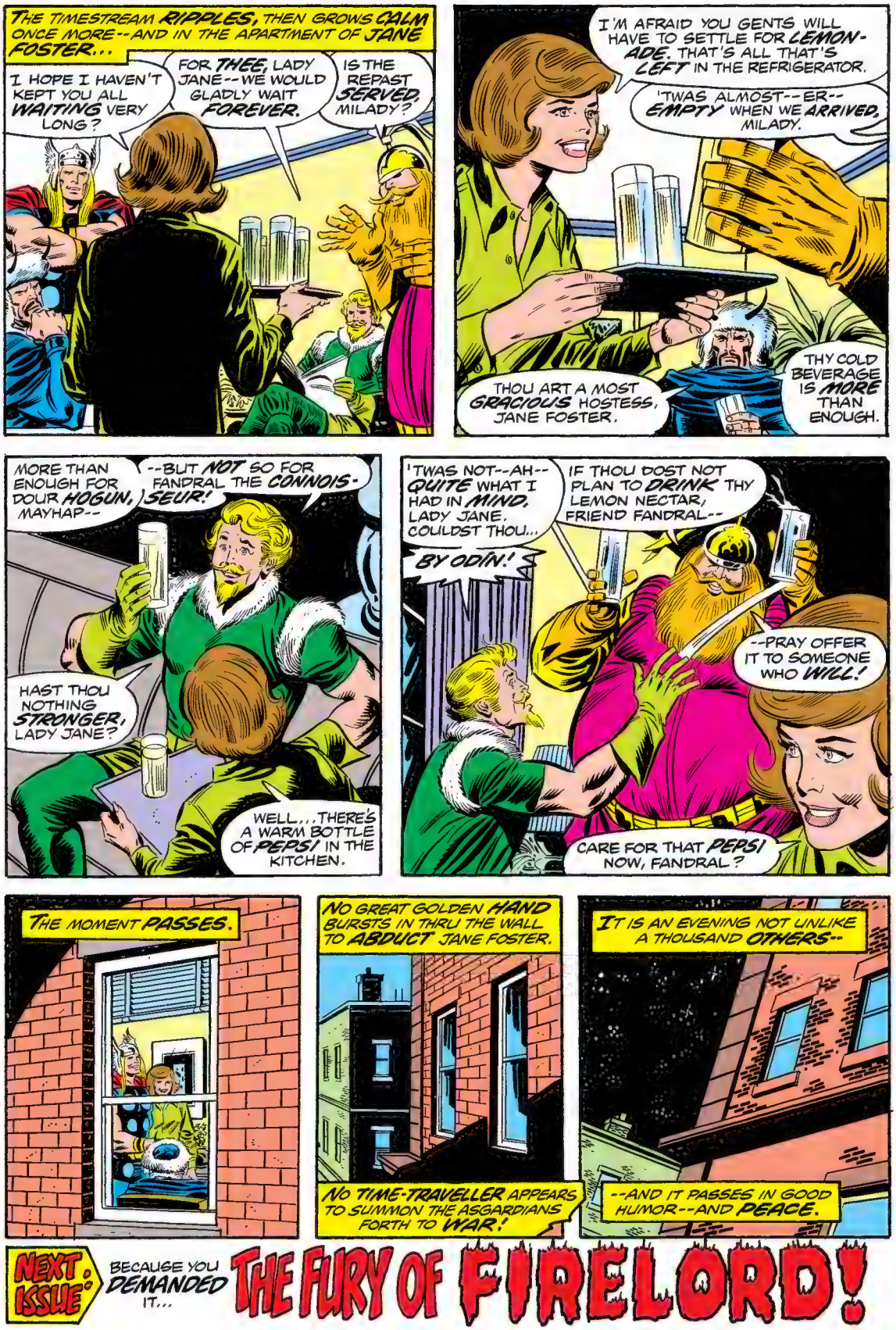
GO SWIFTLY THEN, STRIPLINGS. TIME GROWS SHORT.
THEN COMEST THOU WITH US, OLD ONE. THOU HAST DISCHARGED THY DUTY MOST NOBLY.
LEAVE THY SLEEPERS TO THE SPINNING FATES--AND FLEE!
I APPRECIATE YOUR OFFER, STRIPLING--BUT I CANNOT!

THERE ARE THINGS LEFT TO BE DONE HERE--THAT ONLY I CAN DO.
SAVE YOURSELF WHILE YOU CAN--AND KNOW THAT YOU TAKE WITH YOU AN OLD MAN'S GRATITUDE--
--FOR MORE THAN YOU COULD EVER REALIZE.


FOR A MOMENT, THE THUNDER GOD HESITATES--THEN A SECOND TREMOR ROCKS THE TEMPLE--AND SADLY NODDING HIS HEAD AT THE ANCIENT GUARDIAN'S WISDOM, THOR RACES FROM THE CHAMBER--
--AND STRAIGHT INTO CONVULSING CHAOS!
COME QUICKLY, MILORD THOR! METHINKS THE END DOTH DRAW NIGH!


MAKE HASTE, COMRADES. THE TIME-CUBE CANNOT LINGER.
A MOMENT, VOLSTAGG-- WHILE I BID A FINAL FARE-WELL TO ONE FAR NOBLER THAN WE.
THE PRINCE OF ASGARD GAZES ONE LAST TIME UPON THE TEMPLE OF SLEEPERS, AND BOWS HIS HEAD SLOWLY IN SILENT SALUTE--
--THEN THE MASSIVE METAL PORTAL HUSHES SHUT BEHIND HIM--
--AND THE GREAT GLEAMING CUBE VANISHES BACK INTO THE MISTS OF TIME.
WITHIN THE TEMPLE, HE WHO REMAINS AWAITS THE CATACLYSM QUIETLY.
HE SHUFFLES ABOUT THE CHAMBER MAKING CERTAIN THAT ALL IS IN ITS PROPER PLACE--
--AND JANE FOSTER'S PLAINTIVE WORDS WHIRL WILDLY THRU HIS MIND.
THE NURTURE-PODS BEFORE HIM STILL PULSATE AND GLOW, THEIR SOFT INCANDESCENCE GLINTING BLINDLY OFF THE SINGLE BEAD OF MOISTURE THAT CURLS FROM THE OLD ONE'S EYE.
THEN A WITHERED HAND REACHES TREMBLING ACROSS THE CONTROL CONSOLE--
TERMINATE LIFE-SUPPORT SYSTEMS
--AND DOES WHAT MUST BE DONE!
THE JOURNEY BACK THRU THE CENTURIES IS TINGED WITH AN ATMOSPHERE OF ANTICIPATION--
-- AND DREAD.
FOR, WHATEVER THE TIME-TRAVELLERS HAD EXPECTED TO FIND UPON THEIR RETURN TO THE 50th CENTURY--
--IT CERTAINLY HAD NOT BEEN-- THIS!

TH-THIS ISN'T MY WORLD!
THERE IS TECHNOLOGY EVIDENT HERE THAT I'D NEVER HAVE PERMITTED!
CITIZEN ZARRKO? WE WERE TOLD TO EXPECT YOU SOMEDAY,
FIRST CITIZEN DEREK WISHES TO SPEAK WITH YOU. YOU WILL ACCOMPANY US PLEASE?
THE GUARDS ARE POLITE BUT PERSISTENT, THUS SHORTLY...
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO MY WORLD?
I AM THE LEGACY THAT YOU LEFT BEHIND, ZARRKO--
--AND THIS WORLD IS YOURS NO LONGER!
WHEN YOU AVERTED THE TRAGEDY THAT BEFELL US AND THE TIMESTREAM RESTORED ITSELF, YOU WERE TRAVELLING BETWEEN THE AGES--
--FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, YOU DID NOT EXIST--
--AND THUS THE EARTH WAS REBORN WITH-OUT YOU!
AS FIRST CITIZEN, I WELCOME YOU TO THE FREE FEDERATION OF EARTH! YOU ARE INVITED TO DWELL AMONG US IN PEACE--
--OR YOU ARE FREE TO DEPART!
THE CHOICE, ZARRKO, IS ENTIRELY YOURS!
NO! YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME! I WON'T LET YOU STEAL MY WORLD!
ASGARDIANS, YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME REGAIN MY...
EH?
EVEN IF WE WOULD WANT TO HELP THEE, ZARRKO-- WE CANNOT!
MILORD THOR, W-WE GROW MOST PALE--!
NO--STOP! YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME LIKE THIS!
BUT WE MUST, ZARRKO! THE TIME-TWISTERS WERE DEFEATED ERE THEY COULD E'EN BE BORN--
--THUS THERE WAS NO CAUSE FOR THEE TO HAVE SUMMONED US TO THIS CENTURY--
"--AND SINCE THOU DIDST NOT SUMMON US--
"--WE WERE NEVER HERE!"


THE TIMESTREAM RIPPLES, THEN GROWS CALM ONCE MORE--AND IN THE APARTMENT OF JANE FOSTER...
I HOPE I HAVEN'T KEPT YOU ALL WAITING VERY LONG?
FOR THEE, LADY JANE--WE WOULD GLADLY WAIT FOREVER.
IS THE REPAST SERVED, MILADY?
I'M AFRAID YOU GENTS WILL HAVE TO SETTLE FOR LEMON-ADE. THAT'S ALL THAT'S LEFT IN THE REFRIGERATOR.
'TWAS ALMOST--ER--EMPTY WHEN WE ARRIVED, MILADY.
THOU ART A MOST GRACIOUS HOSTESS, JANE FOSTER.
THY COLD BEVERAGE IS MORE THAN ENOUGH.
MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR DOUR HOGUN, MAYHAP--
--BUT NOT SO FOR FANDRAL THE CONNOIS-SEUR!
HAST THOU NOTHING STRONGER, LADY JANE?
WELL...THERE'S A WARM BOTTLE OF PEPSI IN THE KITCHEN.
'TWAS NOT--AH--QUITE WHAT I HAD IN MIND, LADY JANE. COULDST THOU...
IF THOU DOST NOT PLAN TO DRINK THY LEMON NECTAR, FRIEND FANDRAL--
BY ODIN!
--PRAY OFFER IT TO SOMEONE WHO WILL!
CARE FOR THAT PEPSI NOW, FANDRAL?
THE MOMENT PASSES.
NO GREAT GOLDEN HAND BURSTS IN THRU THE WALL TO ABDUCT JANE FOSTER.
NO TIME-TRAVELLER APPEARS TO SUMMON THE ASGARDIANS FORTH TO WAR!
IT IS AN EVENING NOT UNLIKE A THOUSAND OTHERS--
--AND IT PASSES IN GOOD HUMOR--AND PEACE.
NEXT ISSUE
BECAUSE YOU DEMANDED IT...
THE FURY OF FIRELORD!

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THE MIGHTY
THOR®
SURRENDER, THUNDER GOD-- OR JANE FOSTER DIES!
HE CAN'T SURRENDER, HUMAN! HE ISN'T GOING TO LIVE THAT LONG!
THE FURY OF FIRELORD!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR! TM
JV 174
LEN WEIN . JOHN BUSCEMA & JOE SINNOTT. GLYNIS WEIN • JOHN COSTANZA • MARV WOLFMAN
WRITER/EDITOR ILLUSTRATORS colorist /letterer REBEL WITH A LOST CAUSE
THE FURY OF FIRELORD!
EVER WONDER WHAT THE GODS DO ON THEIR DAY OFF? WHAT AWESOME REVELRY THEY MUST INDULGE IN? WHAT SPECTACULAR ENTERTAINMENTS THEIR IMMORTAL MINDS MUST CONCEIVE?
WELL, WHAT SAY WE DROP BY THE MIDTOWN MANHATTAN APARTMENT OF THOR'S FAIR LADY JANE FOSTER -- AND FIND OUT!
SOOTH, MILADY JANE -- BUT YE MORTALS DO DINE GLORIOUSLY!
THERE DOTH BE NAUGHT IN ALL ASGARD TO COMPARE WITH THE SUMPTUOUS REPAST SERVED BY THY TEMPLE OF THE GOLDEN ARCHES!
PRAY CEASE THY PRATTLING, FRIEND VOLSTAGG.
VERILY, THOU DOST OVERWHELM THE VALIANT VOICES FROM YON VIEWING BOX!
MORE'S THE PITY THAT THE VOLUMINOUS ONE DOTH NOT SMOTHER THE BOX ENTIRE, FANDRAL.

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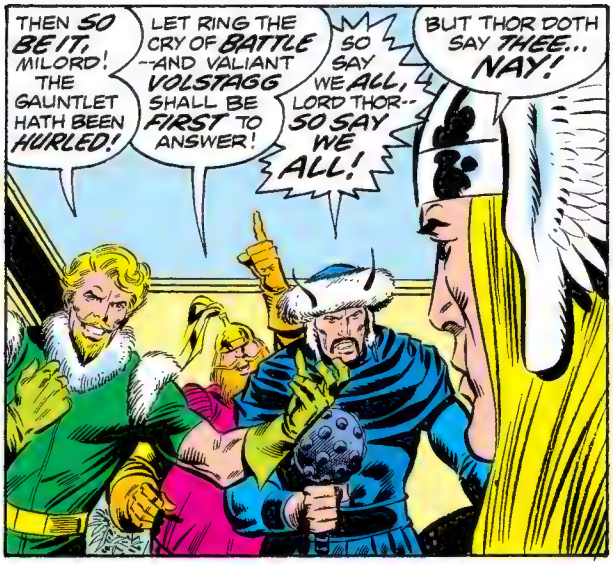
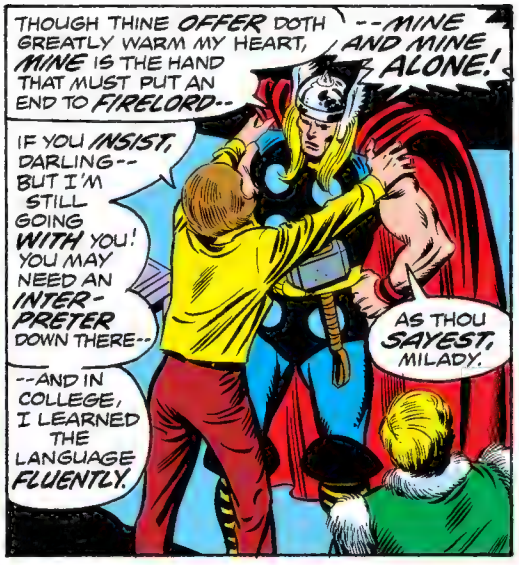
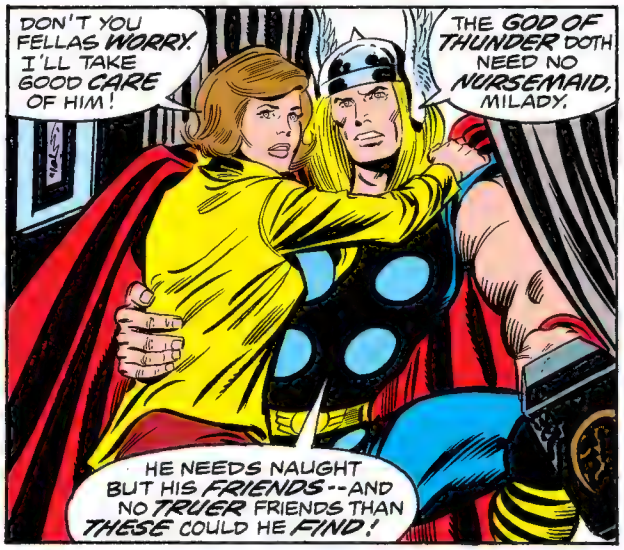
GRIM HOGUN SPEAKS ALL TOO TRULY, FRIEND FANDRAL.
HOW CANST THOU WASTE HOURS ON END, OBSERVING THE TIRING ANTICS OF THE TINY BEINGS WHO DO DWELL WITHIN YON BOX--
--WHEN RATHER THOU COULDST BE CARVING NEW LEGENDS OF THINE OWN?
'TIS NO LIFE FOR A FIGHTING MAN, TO SIT IDLE WHILST...
EH?
THE BATTLE HATH ENDED, DASHING ONE--AND AS EVER, THINE ILLUSTRIOUS ERROL FLYNN HATH TRI-UMPHED!
THIS IS EMORY LEWIS, WITH THE SIX O'CLOCK REPORT.
THE TOP STORY IN THE NEWS TONIGHT IS THE VIOLENT REVO-LUTION RAGING IN THE SMALL LATIN AMERICAN REPUBLIC OF COSTA VERDE!
LED BY THIS MAN, WHO CALLS HIMSELF EL LOBO-- THE WOLF-- THE REBELS HAVE STRUGGLED FOR MONTHS IN AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO OVER-THROW THE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT JUAN ELMIREZ--
--BUT IN THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS, SOMETHING HAS OCCURRED IN COSTA VERDE THAT MAY TURN THE TIDE IN THE REBELS' FAVOR AT LAST!
THAT'S ABOUT ENOUGH OF THAT! I'LL TURN THIS OFF SO WE CAN...
WAIT, MILADY-- A MOMENT LONGER. I WOULD HEAR MORE.
SEEMINGLY FROM OUT OF NOWHERE, A BIZARRE BEING WHO CALLS HIMSELF FIRELORD HAS BECOME A BLAZING FIGUREHEAD FOR THE REBEL CAUSE!
WITH THIS STRANGE CREATURE URGING THE REBELS ONWARD, IT SEEMS DOUBTFUL THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT ELMIREZ CAN LONG SURVIVE!
SO! WHAT I HAVE LONG FEARED HATH FINALLY COME TO PASS!
'TIS MY RESPON-SIBILITY THAT FIRELORD DOTH NOW DWELL AMONG MEN*--
--THUS 'TIS I WHO MUST NOW SMITE HIM DOWN!
* BACK IN THOR #228, FOOTNOTE-FOLLOWERS. -- LEN.

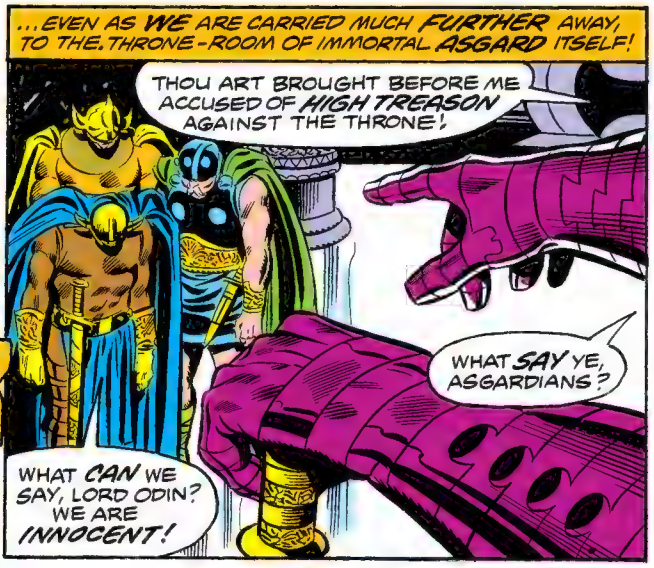

THEN SO BE IT, MILORD! THE GAUNTLET HATH BEEN HURLED!
LET RING THE CRY OF BATTLE --AND VALIANT VOLSTAGG SHALL BE FIRST TO ANSWER!
SO SAY WE ALL, LORD THOR-- SO SAY WE ALL!
BUT THOR DOTH SAY THEE... NAY!


THOUGH THINE OFFER DOTH GREATLY WARM MY HEART, MINE IS THE HAND THAT MUST PUT AN END TO FIRELORD--
--MINE AND MINE ALONE!
IF YOU INSIST, DARLING-- BUT I'M STILL GOING WITH YOU! YOU MAY NEED AN INTER-PRETER DOWN THERE--
AS THOU SAYEST, MILADY.
--AND IN COLLEGE, I LEARNED THE LANGUAGE FLUENTLY.

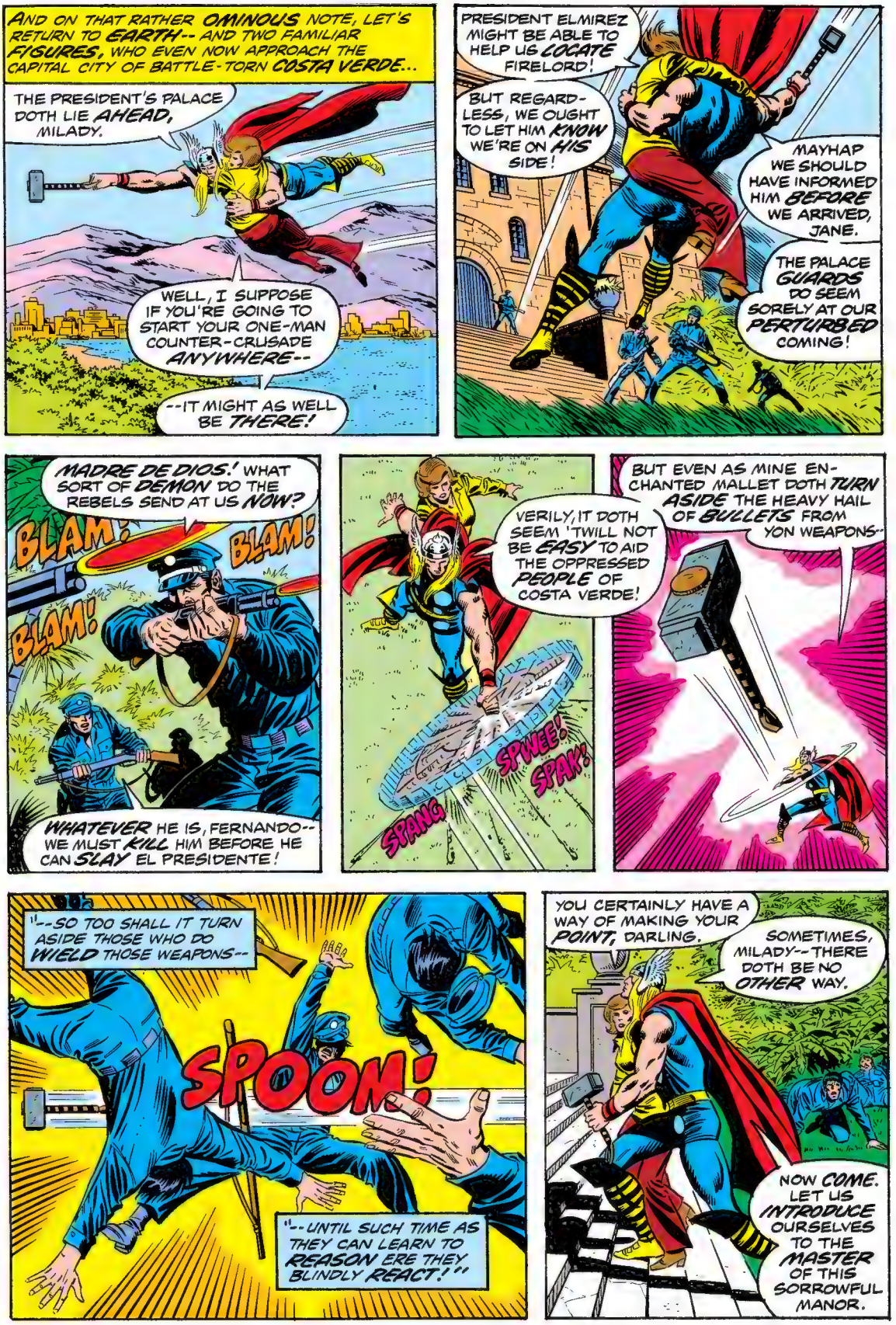
DO AS THOU THINKEST THOU MUST, FRIEND THOR, WE HAVE-- AH-- OTHER THINGS TO OCCUPY US HERE.
BUT IF THOU DOST FIND THOU HAST NEED OF US, THOU HAST BUT TO SPEAK OUR NAMES,
WE WILL BE THERE!


DON'T YOU FELLAS WORRY. I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF HIM!
THE GOD OF THUNDER DOTH NEED NO NURSEMAID, MILADY.
HE NEEDS NAUGHT BUT HIS FRIENDS--AND NO TRUER FRIENDS THAN THESE COULD HE FIND!

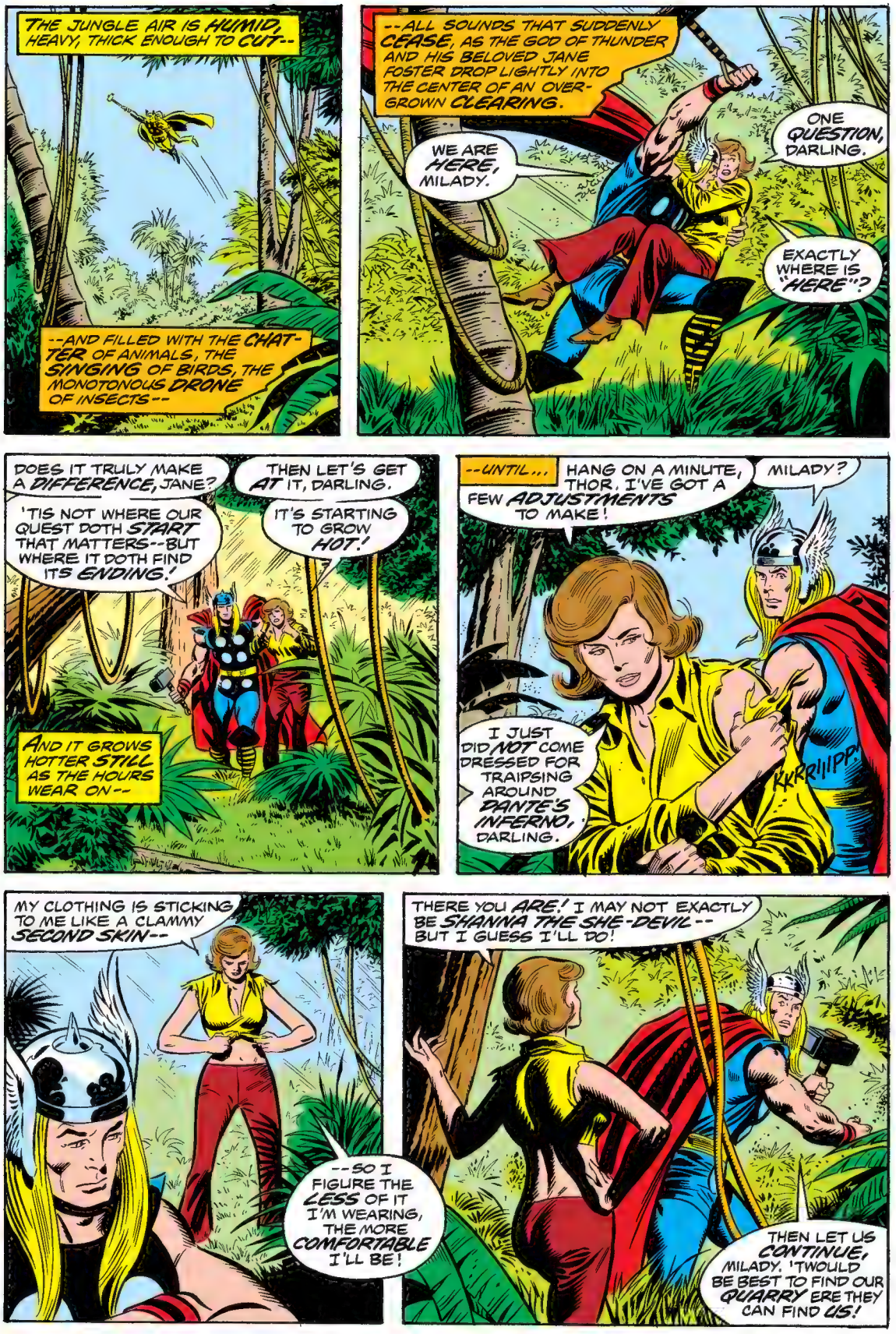
FOR AN INSTANT, THE MIGHTY THOR STANDS FRAMED IN JANE FOSTER'S WINDOW, WHIRLING HIS ENCHANTED HAMMER BEFORE HIM--
--THEN THE MYSTIC MJOLNIR IS HURLED, CARRYING THE THUNDER GOD AND HIS LADY HIGH OVER THE CITY...


...EVEN AS WE ARE CARRIED MUCH FURTHER AWAY, TO THE THRONE-ROOM OF IMMORTAL ASGARD ITSELF!
THOU ART BROUGHT BEFORE ME ACCUSED OF HIGH TREASON AGAINST THE THRONE!
WHAT SAY YE, ASGARDIANS?
WHAT CAN WE SAY, LORD ODIN? WE ARE INNOCENT!

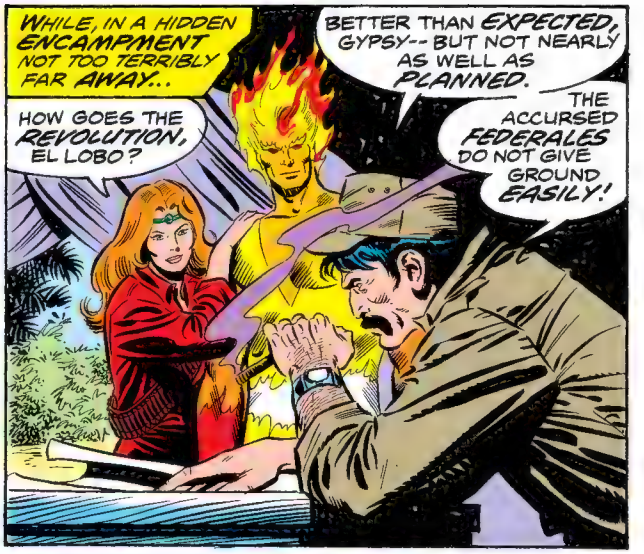
STILL DOST THOU PROTEST THINE INNOCENCE-- WHEN THINE ACCUSER IS THE NOBLE IGRON, ADVISOR TO THE ALL-FATHER HIMSELF?
THOU DOST DARE?
MY LIEGE, THOUGH I AM BUT THY HUMBLE ADVISOR, MIGHT I OFFER A SUGGESTION?
PUT AN END TO THIS CHARADE-- AND SWIFTLY!
NAUGHT WILL BE GAINED BY CONTINUING IT-- SAVE THE FERMENTING OF FURTHER UNREST.
AS EVER, GOOD IGRON-- THOU SPEAKEST A 'RIGHT.
THUS TO THE MOLTEN MIRE-PITS DO I BANISH YE-- UNTIL I DO DECREE THY LESSON HATH BEEN LEARNED!
FOR I AM THE WISDOM, THE WILL, AND THE WAY-- AND TO SET THYSELF AGAINST ODIN IS TO SET THYSELF AGAINST ASGARD!
WITHOUT EVEN A SCREAM, THE THREE CONDEMNED IMMORTALS VANISH-- AND ALL THE GATHERED NOBLES OF THE REALM ETERNAL STAND IN SILENT AWE OF THEIR MONARCH'S JUSTICE--
--ALL, THAT IS, SAVE ONE!
SICKENED TO HIS VERY SOUL BY WHAT HE HAS SEEN, BALDER THE BRAVE, MOST BELOVED OF ALL THE GODS, TURNS TO LEAVE THE PALACE ROYAL--
--ONLY TO BE HALTED IN MID-STRIDE BY A GRIM COMMANDING VOICE!
HAST THOU BEEN GRANTED LEAVE TO DEPART THY MASTER'S COURT, BRAVE BALDER?
THERE WAS A LESSON MOST GRIM TO BE TAUGHT HERE TODAY!
I HOPE THAT THOU HAST LEARNED FROM IT!
INDEED I HAVE, MILORD-- INDEED I HAVE!
I HAVE LEARNED THAT OMNIPOTENT ODIN, THE LIVING HEART OF THE GOLDEN REALM, HATH GONE INSANE!

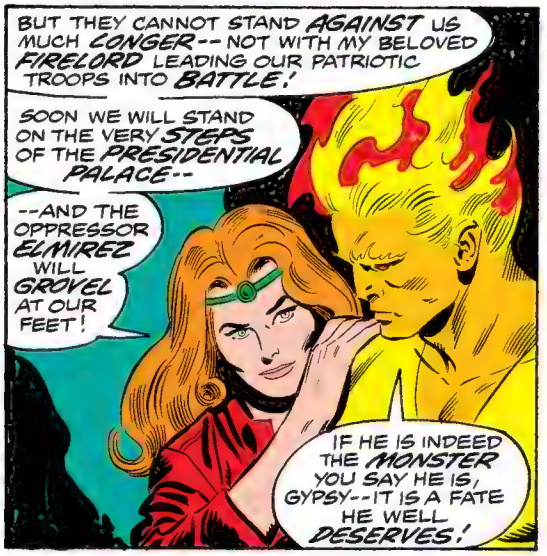

AND ON THAT RATHER OMINOUS NOTE, LET'S RETURN TO EARTH-- AND TWO FAMILIAR FIGURES, WHO EVEN NOW APPROACH THE CAPITAL CITY OF BATTLE-TORN COSTA VERDE...
THE PRESIDENT'S PALACE DOTH LIE AHEAD, MILADY.
WELL, I SUPPOSE IF YOU'RE GOING TO START YOUR ONE-MAN COUNTER-CRUSADE ANYWHERE--
--IT MIGHT AS WELL BE THERE!
PRESIDENT ELMIREZ MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP US LOCATE FIRELORD!
BUT REGARDLESS, WE OUGHT TO LET HIM KNOW WE'RE ON HIS SIDE!
MAYHAP WE SHOULD HAVE INFORMED HIM BEFORE WE ARRIVED, JANE.
THE PALACE GUARDS DO SEEM SORELY AT OUR PERTURBED COMING!
MADRE DE DIOS! WHAT SORT OF DEMON DO THE REBELS SEND AT US NOW?
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
WHATEVER HE IS, FERNANDO-- WE MUST KILL HIM BEFORE HE CAN SLAY EL PRESIDENTE!
VERILY, IT DOTH SEEM 'TWILL NOT BE EASY TO AID THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF COSTA VERDE!
SPANG
SPWEE!
SPAK!
BUT EVEN AS MINE ENCHANTED MALLET DOTH TURN ASIDE THE HEAVY HAIL OF BULLETS FROM YON WEAPONS--
"--SO TOO SHALL IT TURN ASIDE THOSE WHO DO WIELD THOSE WEAPONS--
SPOOM!
"--UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THEY CAN LEARN TO REASON ERE THEY BLINDLY REACT!"
YOU CERTAINLY HAVE A WAY OF MAKING YOUR POINT, DARLING.
SOMETIMES, MILADY--THERE DOTH BE NO OTHER WAY.
NOW COME. LET US INTRODUCE OURSELVES TO THE MASTER OF THIS SORROWFUL MANOR.

THUS, MOMENTS LATER...
WHO KNOCKED ON MY DOOR? WHOEVER IT IS, GO AWAY BEFORE I... MADRE DE DIOS!
WH-WHO ARE YOU? WH-WHAT DO YOU WANT HERE?
HONORED MORTAL, THOR, GOD OF THUNDER, SON OF ODIN, PRINCE OF ASGARD, DEFENDER OF THE REALM ETERNAL, DOTH GIVE THEE GREETINGS!
I HAVE COME TO RID THY NOBLE COUNTRY OF THE VILLAINOUS EL LOBO--AND THE ALIEN MENACE CALLED FIRELORD!
Y-YOU WHAT? B-BUT HOW DO I KNOW Y-YOU'RE TELLING THE TRUTH?
H-HOW DO I KNOW THIS ISN'T JUST ANOTHER OF EL LOBO'S TRICKS?
THOR DOTH GIVE THEE HIS MOST SACRED WORD, MORTAL--AND NO MAN MAY ASK FOR MORE.
NOW SPEAK, MAN! TELL ME WHERE I MIGHT FIND THOSE I DO SEEK!
Y-YOU REALLY DO WANT TO HELP MY BELOVED COSTA VERDE?
THEN GO, AMIGO--WITH MY BLESSINGS!
EL LOBO AND HIS REBELS ARE HIDDEN IN THE JUNGLE THAT SURROUNDS THE CAPITAL CITY.
IT IS THERE YOU WILL FIND HIM... OR HE WILL FIND YOU!
WHATEVER THE MANNER OF OUR MEETING, MORTAL, I DO ASSURE THEE--
--'TIS EL LOBO WHO WILL SURELY REGRET IT!
NOW, MILADY --LET US BEGONE!
CARAMBA! BLOODTHIRSTY REBELS... FLAME-HEADED DEMONS... GOLDEN-HAIRED GODS WITH FLYING HAMMERS...
WHY DID I EVER GET INTO POLITICS?


THE JUNGLE AIR IS HUMID, HEAVY, THICK ENOUGH TO CUT--
--AND FILLED WITH THE CHATTER OF ANIMALS, THE SINGING OF BIRDS, THE MONOTONOUS DRONE OF INSECTS--
--ALL SOUNDS THAT SUDDENLY CEASE, AS THE GOD OF THUNDER AND HIS BELOVED JANE FOSTER DROP LIGHTLY INTO THE CENTER OF AN OVERGROWN CLEARING.
WE ARE HERE, MILADY.
ONE QUESTION, DARLING.
EXACTLY WHERE IS "HERE"?
DOES IT TRULY MAKE A DIFFERENCE, JANE?
'TIS NOT WHERE OUR QUEST DOTH START THAT MATTERS--BUT WHERE IT DOTH FIND ITS ENDING!
THEN LET'S GET AT IT, DARLING.
IT'S STARTING TO GROW HOT!
AND IT GROWS HOTTER STILL AS THE HOURS WEAR ON--
--UNTIL...
HANG ON A MINUTE, THOR, I'VE GOT A FEW ADJUSTMENTS TO MAKE!
MILADY?
I JUST DID NOT COME DRESSED FOR TRAIPSING AROUND DANTE'S INFERNO, DARLING.
KKRRIIPP!
MY CLOTHING IS STICKING TO ME LIKE A CLAMMY SECOND SKIN--
--SO I FIGURE THE LESS OF IT I'M WEARING, THE MORE COMFORTABLE I'LL BE!
THERE YOU ARE! I MAY NOT EXACTLY BE SHANNA THE SHE-DEVIL--BUT I GUESS I'LL DO!
THEN LET US CONTINUE, MILADY. 'TWOULD BE BEST TO FIND OUR QUARRY ERE THEY CAN FIND US!

UNFORTUNATELY, THE ODINSON'S ADMONITION COMES A TRIFLE TOO LATE!
FOR SEVERAL MINUTES, A KHAKI-CLAD FORM FOLLOWS THESE STRANGE INTRUDERS INTO HIS DOMAIN--
--THEN TURNS, AND RACES OFF INTO THE UNDERBRUSH.


WHILE, IN A HIDDEN ENCAMPMENT NOT TOO TERRIBLY FAR AWAY...
HOW GOES THE REVOLUTION, EL LOBO?
BETTER THAN EXPECTED, GYPSY-- BUT NOT NEARLY AS WELL AS PLANNED.
THE ACCURSED FEDERALES DO NOT GIVE GROUND EASILY!

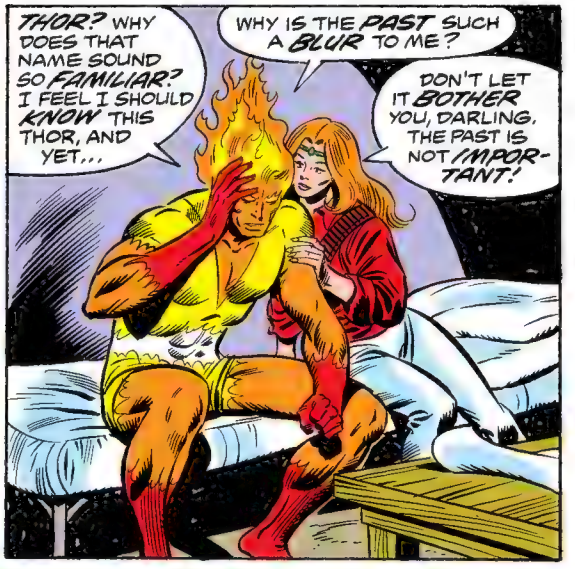

BUT THEY CANNOT STAND AGAINST US MUCH LONGER-- NOT WITH MY BELOVED FIRELORD LEADING OUR PATRIOTIC TROOPS INTO BATTLE!
SOON WE WILL STAND ON THE VERY STEPS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE--
--AND THE OPPRESSOR ELMIREZ WILL GROVEL AT OUR FEET!
IF HE IS INDEED THE MONSTER YOU SAY HE IS, GYPSY--IT IS A FATE HE WELL DESERVES!

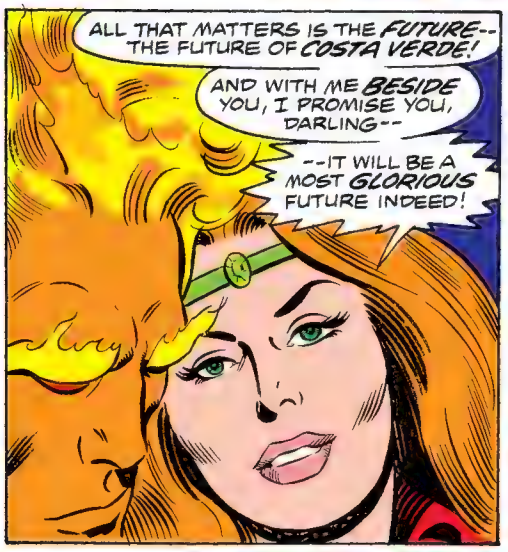
SWEET GYPSY HAS DONE VERY WELL. THE LOCO ALIEN IS COMPLETELY UNDER HER SPELL.
AS LONG AS FIRELORD BELIEVES THE WITCH LOVES HIM, THERE IS NOTHING HE WILL NOT DO AT HER COMMAND..
...INCLUDING DELIVERING COSTA VERDE TO US ON A STOLEN SILVER PLATTER!

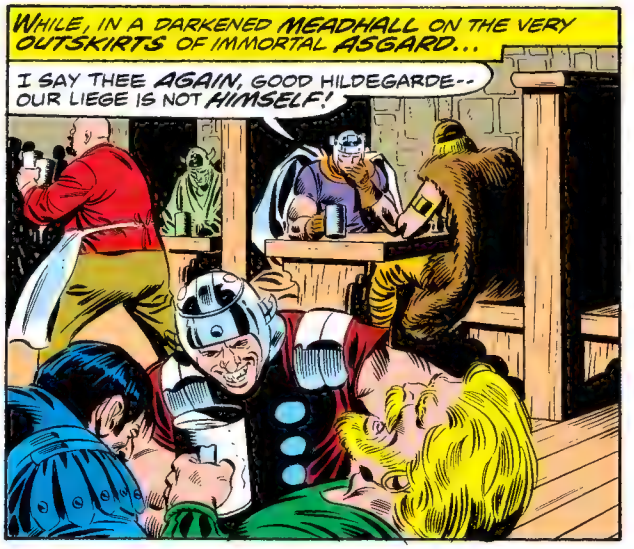
EL LOBO-- COME QUICKLY! WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!
WHAT IS IT, LUIS? DO THE FEDERALES MARCH ON US AGAIN?
NO, MI GENERALE-- THERE ARE ONLY TWO. ONE IS JUST A WOMAN, BUT THE OTHER...
THE OTHER IS MORE LIKE A GOD THAN A MAN! H-HE CARRIES A FLYING HAMMER--
--AND THE WOMAN, SHE CALLED HIM--THOR!
FOR A LITTLE THING LIKE THIS, YOU BOTHER ME?

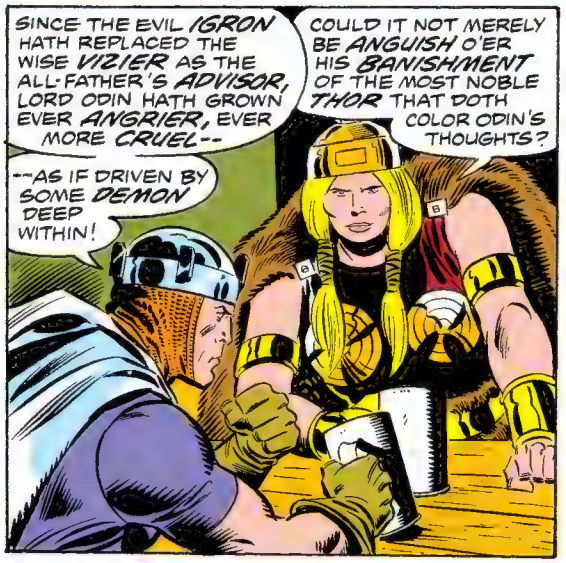
LUIS, ARE YOU NOT A SOLDIER IN THE ARMY OF THE REVOLUTION?
SI, MI GENERALE.
AND ARE YOU NOT MY SECOND-IN-COMMAND?
S-SI, MI GENERALE.
THEN GO DO WHAT SUCH A MAN IS SUPPOSED TO DO!

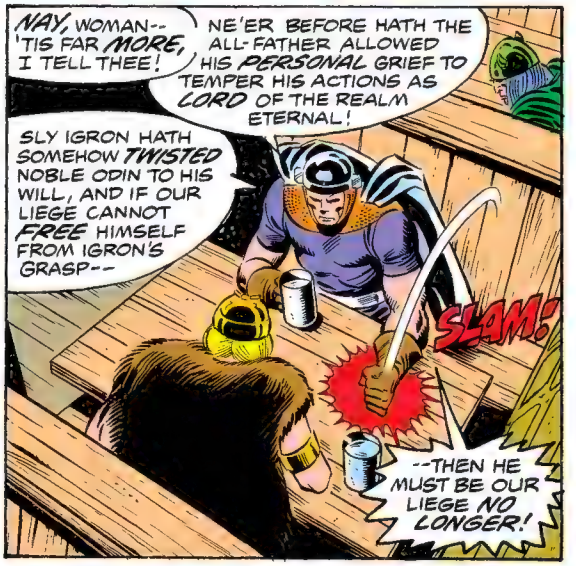
TAKE SOME MEN, ESTUPIDO, AND KILL THE TWO INTRUDERS--
--BEFORE I THROW YOU BACK INTO THE CESSPOOL WHERE I FOUND YOU!
S-S-SI, MI GENERALE!

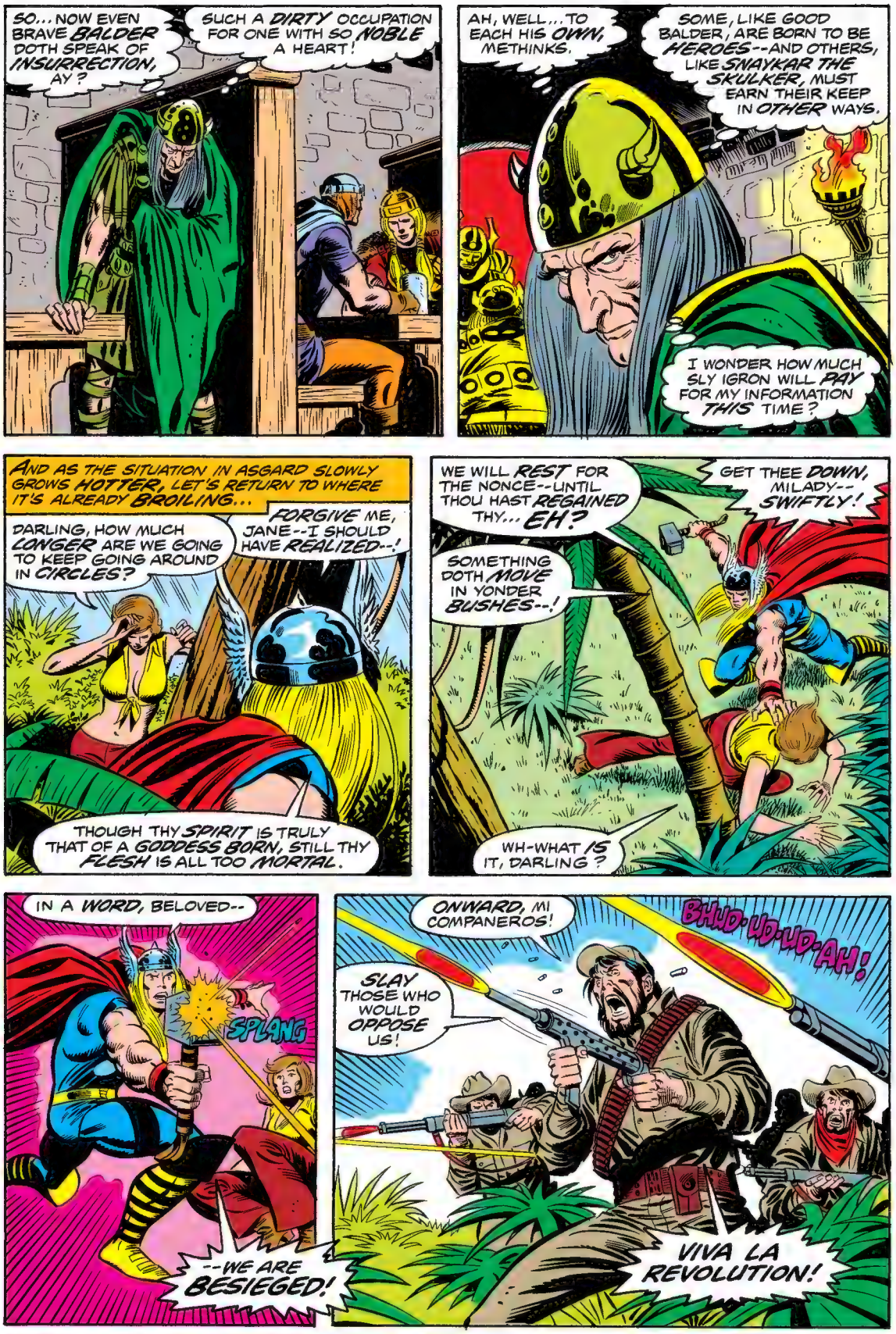

THOR? WHY DOES THAT NAME SOUND SO FAMILIAR? I FEEL I SHOULD KNOW THIS THOR, AND YET...
WHY IS THE PAST SUCH A BLUR TO ME?
DON'T LET IT BOTHER YOU, DARLING, THE PAST IS NOT IMPORTANT!


ALL THAT MATTERS IS THE FUTURE-- THE FUTURE OF COSTA VERDE!
AND WITH ME BESIDE YOU, I PROMISE YOU, DARLING--
--IT WILL BE A MOST GLORIOUS FUTURE INDEED!


WHILE, IN A DARKENED MEADHALL ON THE VERY OUTSKIRTS OF IMMORTAL ASGARD...
I SAY THEE AGAIN, GOOD HILDEGARDE-- OUR LIEGE IS NOT HIMSELF!


SINCE THE EVIL IGRON HATH REPLACED THE WISE VIZIER AS THE ALL-FATHER'S ADVISOR, LORD ODIN HATH GROWN EVER ANGRIER, EVER MORE CRUEL--
--AS IF DRIVEN BY SOME DEMON DEEP WITHIN!
COULD IT NOT MERELY BE ANGUISH O'ER HIS BANISHMENT OF THE MOST NOBLE THOR THAT DOTH COLOR ODIN'S THOUGHTS?


NAY, WOMAN-- 'TIS FAR MORE, I TELL THEE!
NE'ER BEFORE HATH THE ALL-FATHER ALLOWED HIS PERSONAL GRIEF TO TEMPER HIS ACTIONS AS LORD OF THE REALM ETERNAL!
SLY IGRON HATH SOMEHOW TWISTED NOBLE ODIN TO HIS WILL, AND IF OUR LIEGE CANNOT FREE HIMSELF FROM IGRON'S GRASP--
SLAM!
--THEN HE MUST BE OUR LIEGE NO LONGER!


SO... NOW EVEN BRAVE BALDER DOTH SPEAK OF INSURRECTION, AY?
SUCH A DIRTY OCCUPATION FOR ONE WITH SO NOBLE A HEART!
AH, WELL... TO EACH HIS OWN, METHINKS.
SOME, LIKE GOOD BALDER, ARE BORN TO BE HEROES--AND OTHERS, LIKE SNAYKAR THE SKULKER, MUST EARN THEIR KEEP IN OTHER WAYS.
I WONDER HOW MUCH SLY IGRON WILL PAY FOR MY INFORMATION THIS TIME?
AND AS THE SITUATION IN ASGARD SLOWLY GROWS HOTTER, LET'S RETURN TO WHERE IT'S ALREADY BROILING...
DARLING, HOW MUCH LONGER ARE WE GOING TO KEEP GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES?
FORGIVE ME, JANE--I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED--!
THOUGH THY SPIRIT IS TRULY THAT OF A GODDESS BORN, STILL THY FLESH IS ALL TOO MORTAL.
WE WILL REST FOR THE NONCE--UNTIL THOU HAST REGAINED THY... EH?
GET THEE DOWN, MILADY--- SWIFTLY!
SOMETHING DOTH MOVE IN YONDER BUSHES--!
WH-WHAT IS IT, DARLING?
IN A WORD, BELOVED--
SPLANG
--WE ARE BESIEGED!
ONWARD, MI COMPANEROS!
SLAY THOSE WHO WOULD OPPOSE US!
BHUD-UD-UD-AH!
VIVA LA REVOLUTION!

IS MADNESS A WAY OF LIFE IN THIS LAND?
SPAK
AK AK
AK AK!
ONCE AGAIN, UNTHINKING MORTALS DO SPRAY THE AIR WITH THEIR BELOVED BULLETS--
"--AND ONCE AGAIN, THE POWER OF MINE ENCHANTED URU HAMMER DOTH RETURN THE LEADEN PELLETS WHENCE THEY CAME!"
SPWEEE
SPWEEE
SPWEEE
MADRE DE MI! STOP SHOOTING, AMIGOS-- BEFORE WE KILL OURSELVES!
THEN PUT YOUR RIFLES ASIDE, AMIGOS--
--AND LET US TEAR THE GOLDEN-HAIRED ONE APART WITH OUR BARE HANDS!
FOOLISH MORTALS, HAST THOU NOT YET LEARNED?
"BULLETS... FISTS... ALL ARE AS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE RAGING FURY OF MJOLNIR!"
THWAMM!
BUT MY BATTLE BE NOT WITH YE, MORTALS. I SEEK ONLY THY LEADER EL LOBO-- AND THE ALIEN CALLED FIRELORD!
SHOW ME TO THEM AND I SHALL NOT...
ZOUNDS!
THAT'S THE WAY, COMPADRES! EVEN SUCH AS HE CANNOT STAND AGAINST US ALL!
SEE HOW HE FALLS BEFORE OUR SHEER WEIGHT OF NUMBERS?
WE WILL CRUSH HIM BENEATH US, THEN...

CARAMBA! IT IS NOT POSSIBLE--!
THE GOLDEN-HAIRED ONE BUCKS BENEATH US LIKE A HERD OF WILD STALLIONS!
WE CANNOT HOLD HIM DOWN!
AWAY, MORTALS! AWAY, I SAY YE--
--LEST THOU DOST SEAL THINE OWN FATES!
FOR 'TIS ODIN'S ENCHANTMENT THAT MINE MYSTIC MALLET MUST EVER RETURN TO MINE HAND--
--NO MATTER WHAT MIGHT STAND IN ITS WAY!
HADST THOU STOOD BETWEEN US, MIGHTY MJOLNIR WOULD HAVE CRUSHED YE ALL TO PULP!
--A FATE I WOULD WISH ON NO MAN!
THEN THROW YOUR WEAPON DOWN, AMIGO--
--OR MY PISTOL WILL DO WORSE TO YOUR WOMAN THAN YOUR HAMMER COULD EVER HAVE DONE TO US!
HUH?
WHAMM!
I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF, DARLING! YOU DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO!
IN A PURPLE PIG'S EYE YOU WILL, MISTER!
HE WILL NOT LIVE THAT LONG, CHIQUITA!
I AM MANUEL-- AND I WILL SNAP THE GRINGO'S SCRAWNY NECK!
ENOUGH, MORTAL!

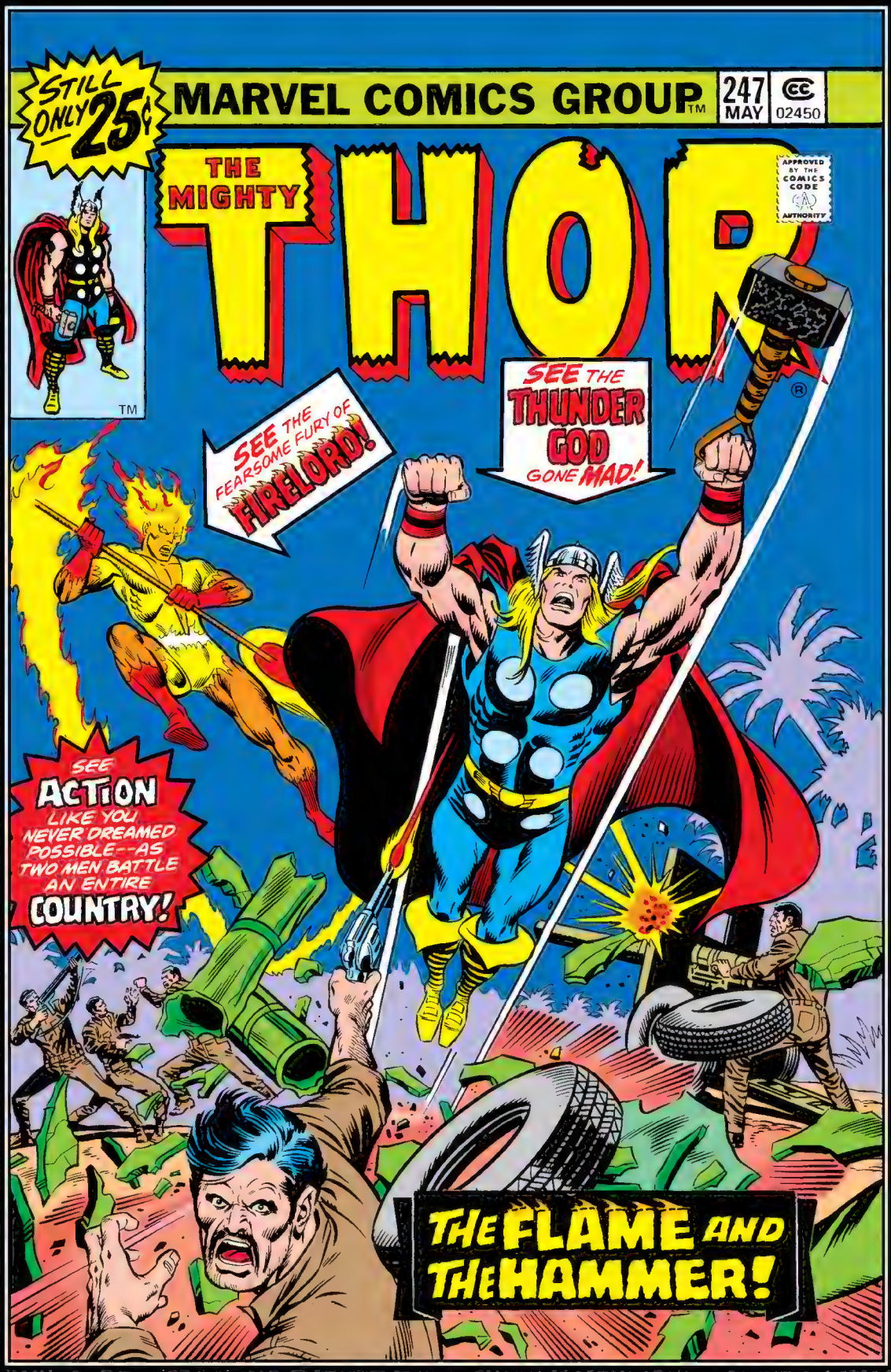
I GROW MOST TIRED OF THIS CHILDISH GAME--
--BUT THY COMRADES, IT DOTH SEEM, HAVE NOT!
N-NOOO!
"THEN CONTINUE THINE INFANTILE ENTERTAINMENT IF THOU MUST, FOOLISH MORTALS--
PLOW!
!--BUT CONTINUE IT BY THYSELVES!"
ENOUGH, BLONDHAIR--WE KNOW WHEN WE ARE BEATEN!
T-TAKE YOUR WOMAN AND GO! WE WILL NOT TRY TO STOP YOU!
EVEN WE ARE NOT THAT INSANE!
THEN TELL ME WHERE I WILL FIND THOSE I DO SEEK, AND WE SHALL LEAVE THEE IN...
EH?
IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR FIRELORD, INTRUDER--YOU NEED LOOK NO FURTHER!
FOR YOU HAVE FOUND HIM!
BE CAREFUL, DARLING! THE GOLDEN-HAIRED ONE IS DANGEROUS!
SO AM I, MY DEAR GYPSY... SO AM I!
FIRELORD, WE HAVE MET BEFORE... AS FRIENDS!* I WOULD HAVE IT THUS AGAIN!
TURN AWAY FROM THOSE WHO SEEK TO CONQUER COSTA VERDE! STAND BESIDE ME IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM!
*SEEN AS RECENTLY AS THOR #234. --LEN.

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, FIRELORD! HE ONLY TRIES TO CONFUSE YOU-- AS ELMIREZ HAS CONFUSED OUR POOR OPPRESSED PEOPLE!
KILL HIM QUICKLY, MY DARLING--BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!
FOR A MOMENT, I THOUGHT... BUT NO! AS ALWAYS, GYPSY-- YOU ARE RIGHT!
FOR THE GLORY OF COSTA VERDE, THE ONE CALLED THOR MUST--DIE!
NOT SO LONG AS MY CRIMSON BATTLE CLOAK CAN SHIELD ME FROM THINE ANGRY FLAMES!
VERILY, I HAD HOPED TO TURN THEE FROM THE PATH OF MADNESS, FIERY ONE--
SPOOM!
--BUT IF BATTLE THOU DOST WANT--
--THEN BATTLE THOU SHALT HAVE!
THEN YOUR DEATH IS ASSURED, FOOL--
--FOR NOTHING THAT LIVES CAN STAND BEFORE THE COSMIC ENERGY OF MY FIRESTAFF!
NOR IS THE POWER OF ENCHANTED MJOLNIR SOMETHING TO BE LIGHTLY RECKONED WITH, ALIEN!
BUT OUR POWERS ARE TOO EVENLY MATCHED!
A STALEMATE SUCH AS THIS COULD RAGE FOR HOURS--
--LEST ONE OF US DOTH TAKE THE INITIATIVE--
--AND DOTH SWIFTLY STRIKE!
BY ALL THE STARS OF SPACE!
YOU MUST BE MAD!

NAY, FIRELORD-- NOT MAD!
I--AM-- ENRAGED!
PWAM!
*UNTIL GOLDILOCKS AND HERCULES RELEASED HIM BACK IN THOR #228.--L.
WHEN I SEE SUCH AS THEE, WHO ONCE SOARED THRU SPACE AS FAITHFUL HERALD TO THE WORLD-DEVOURING GALACTUS,* REDUCED TO USURPING A PITIFUL LITTLE NATION SUCH AS THIS--
--THE RIGHTEOUS ANGER OF THE GOD OF THUNDER DOTH KNOW NO BOUNDS!
SILENCE, THOR-- I WILL HEAR NO MORE!
BRAK
WHY DO YOU TORMENT ME SO WITH THINGS THAT HAVE NO MEANING TO ME?
DOST THOU NOW SEEK TO DENY THY PAST, FIRELORD?
HAST THOU SUNK SO LOW?
I HAVE NO PAST, THUNDER GOD-- NO MEMORIES!
WHAK!
I HAVE ONLY THE LOVE OF THE WOMAN CALLED GYPSY--
--AND I NEED NOTHING ELSE!
CHOOM!
CHOOM!
CHOOM!

THEN THE ANSWER DOTH AT LAST BECOME CLEAR!
'TIS NOT OF THINE OWN WILL THAT THOU DOST SEEK TO CONQUER COSTA VERDE!
METHINKS THE WOMAN CALLED GYPSY HATH SOMEHOW BEWITCHED THEE, FIERY ONE--
--AND BY THE BEARD OF MY FATHER, I SHALL FREE THEE FROM HER ENCHANTMENT--
CHOK!
--OR PERISH IN THE TRYING!
THWAM!
MADRE DE DIOS! IT CANNOT BE--! THE GOLDEN-HAIRED ONE IS DEFEATING THE FIRELORD! BUT HOW--?
PERHAPS THE FLAMING ONE CANNOT FULLY CONTROL HIS POWERS WHILE UNDER YOUR SPELL!
BUT WITHOUT MY SPELL, FIRE-LORD WILL NOT FOLLOW US!
THEN THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO, WOMAN-- BUT PRAY!
NO--WE'RE NOT FINISHED YET! THE GOLDEN-HAIR TOO HAS A WEAKNESS--
--THE WOMAN!
SEIZE HER-- AND WE SEIZE THE ADVANTAGE!
YOU ARE A COLD ONE, GYPSY-- BUT YOU ARE RIGHT!
MAKE ONE MOVE, WOMAN--AND YOU DIE!
WHAT--?!?
QUICKLY, EL LOBO-- BEFORE THE GOLDEN-HAIR CAN STRIKE THE FINAL BLOW!
ORDER THE BATTLE TO...

STOP, GOLDEN-HAIR-- IF YOU VALUE YOUR WOMAN'S LIFE!
WHAT--?!?
DROP YOUR HAMMER, AMIGO--NOW!
OR I ASSURE YOU YOUR WOMAN WILL REGRET IT!
DARLING, DON'T LISTEN--!
SHE IS BRAVE, YOUR LOVER--BUT FOOLISH!
LAY DOWN YOUR WEAPON, AS EL LOBO SAYS--AND LET US TALK. THERE IS MUCH ABOUT US YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND!
I KNOW ALL I HAVE NEED TO KNOW, GYPSY!
GOLDEN-HAIR, YOU KNOW NOTHING AT ALL!
THE ARMY OF THE REVOLUTION IS THE ONLY HOPE FOR OUR BELOVED COSTA VERDE!
WE WHO FIGHT THE OPPRESSOR ELMIREZ FIGHT FOR THE FREE-DOM OF THE MASSES--
--AND THOSE WHO FIGHT BESIDE US ARE BLESSED IN THE EYES OF THE GODS!
"WILL YOU FIGHT BESIDE US, GOLDEN-HAIR?
"WILL YOU WIELD YOUR HAMMER IN THE NAME OF LIBERTY?"
DARLING, DON'T LISTEN TO HER! IT'S A TRICK!
SHE'S TRYING TO BEWITCH YOU--JUST LIKE SHE DID FIRELORD!
YOU'RE TOO LATE, WOMAN! THE DEED IS DONE!
FROM THIS MOMENT ON, THE ONE CALLED THOR CAN HEAR ONLY ME--
--AND WITH HE AND THE FIRELORD BOTH UNDER MY CONTROL--
--THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN STOP US NOW!
NEXT ISSUE:
A RAVAGED LAND BATTLES FOR ITS LIFE AGAINST THE WORLD-SHAKING POWER OF...
"THE FLAME AND THE HAMMER!"


STILL ONLY 25¢
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
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02450
THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
SEE THE FEARSOME FURY OF FIRELORD!
SEE THE THUNDER GOD GONE MAD!
SEE ACTION LIKE YOU NEVER DREAMED POSSIBLE--AS TWO MEN BATTLE AN ENTIRE COUNTRY!
THE FLAME AND THE HAMMER!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

JV255

LEN WEIN WRITER•EDITOR / JOHN BUSCEMA & JOE SINNOTT ILLUSTRATORS / G. WEIN COLORIST / J. ROSEN LETTERER / MARV WOLFMAN TOKEN GRINGO

KNOW YE THIS!
THE GOD OF THUNDER HATH SEEMINGLY GONE MAD!
NOW, AT THE SIDE OF THE ALIEN CALLED FIRELORD, HE DOTH BATTLE THE DESPERATE ARMY OF THE REVOLUTION-TORN REPUBLIC CALLED COSTE VERDE--
--AND IT DOTH SEEM THERE BE NOTHING 'PON ALL THE EARTH THAT MAY STOP HIM!
WE'LL FILL IN THE DETAILS AS WE GO ALONG, FAITHFUL ONE--'CAUSE FROM HERE ON, IT'S ACTION-TIME!
THE FLAME AND THE HAMMER!

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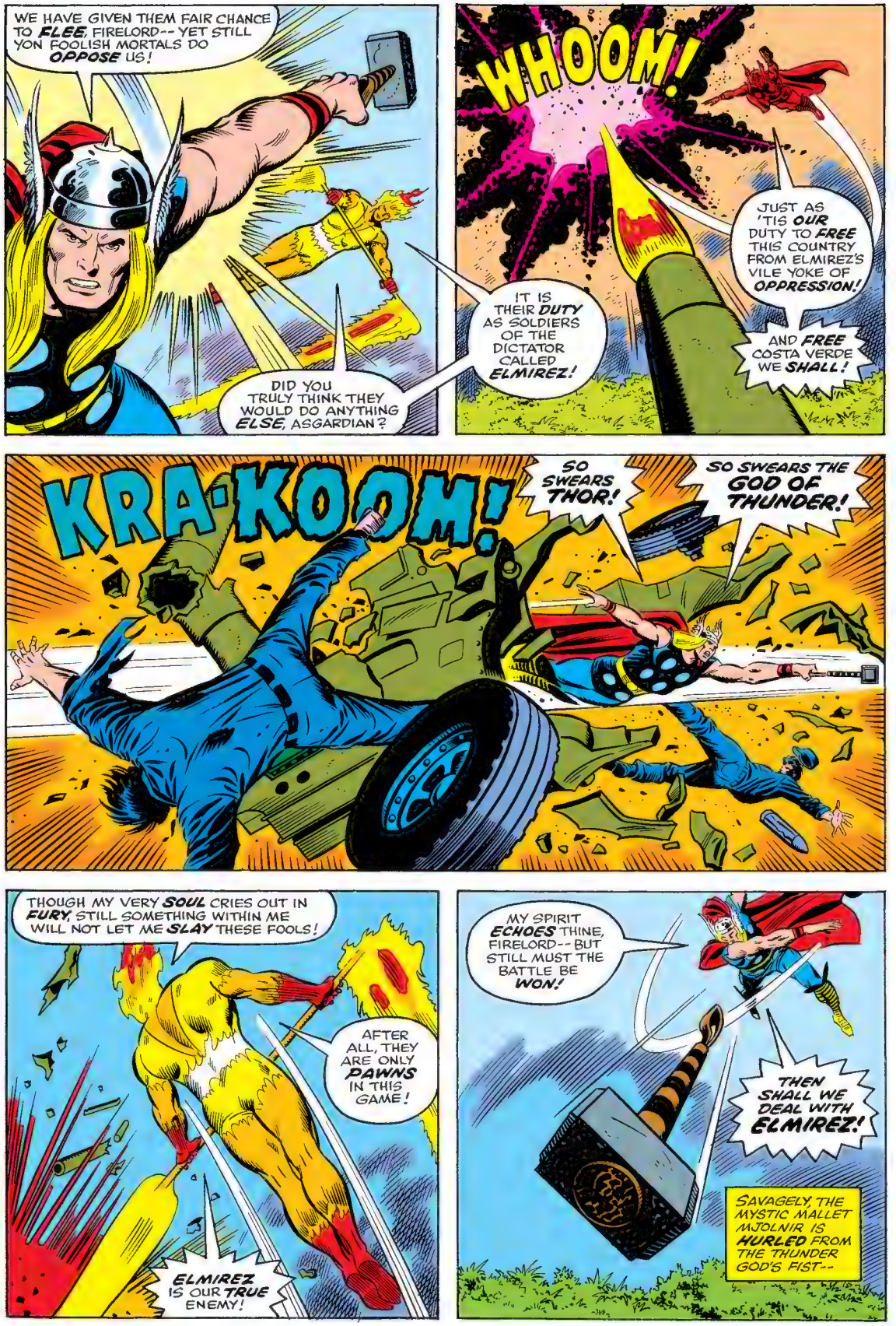
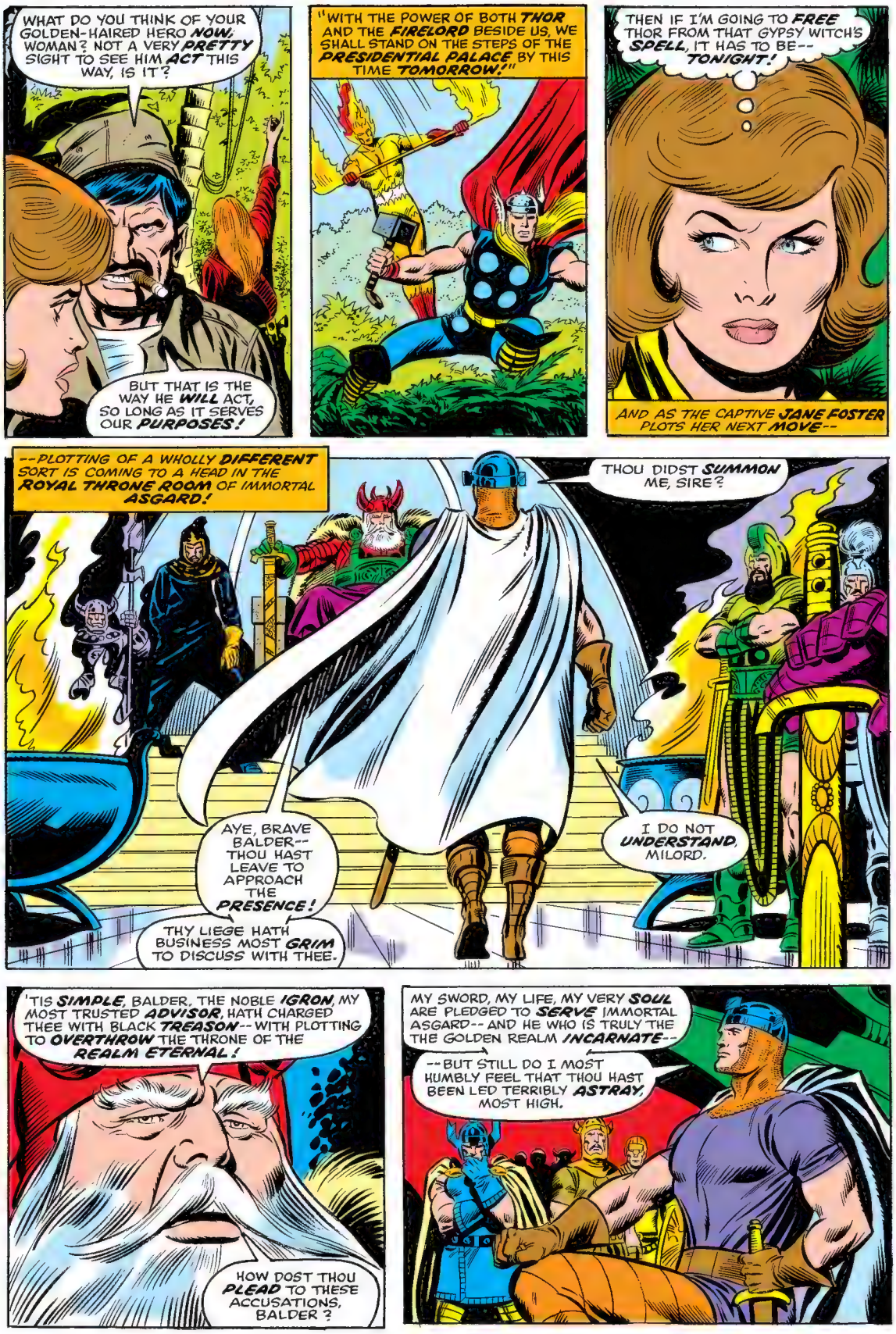

WE HAVE GIVEN THEM FAIR CHANCE TO FLEE, FIRELORD-- YET STILL YON FOOLISH MORTALS DO OPPOSE US!
DID YOU TRULY THINK THEY WOULD DO ANYTHING ELSE, ASGARDIAN?
IT IS THEIR DUTY AS SOLDIERS OF THE DICTATOR CALLED ELMIREZ!
WHOOM!
JUST AS 'TIS OUR DUTY TO FREE THIS COUNTRY FROM ELMIREZ'S VILE YOKE OF OPPRESSION!
AND FREE COSTA VERDE WE SHALL!
KRA-KOOM!
SO SWEARS THOR!
SO SWEARS THE GOD OF THUNDER!
THOUGH MY VERY SOUL CRIES OUT IN FURY, STILL SOMETHING WITHIN ME WILL NOT LET ME SLAY THESE FOOLS!
AFTER ALL, THEY ARE ONLY PAWNS IN THIS GAME!
ELMIREZ IS OUR TRUE ENEMY!
MY SPIRIT ECHOES THINE, FIRELORD-- BUT STILL MUST THE BATTLE BE WON!
THEN SHALL WE DEAL WITH ELMIREZ!
SAVAGELY, THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR IS HURLED FROM THE THUNDER GOD'S FIST--

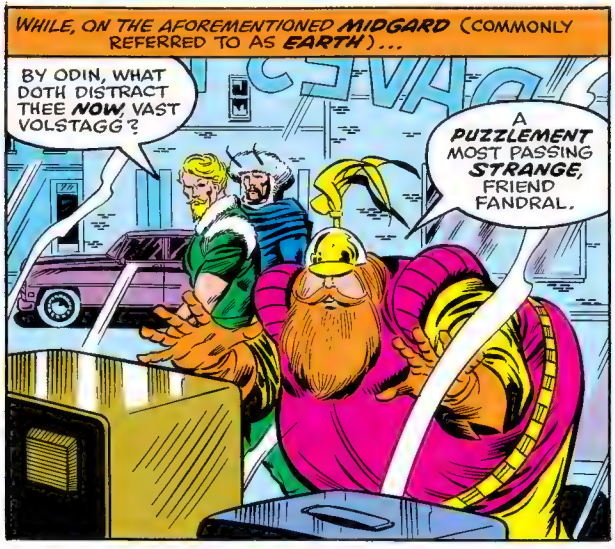
--AND WITHOUT HIS ENCHANTED WEAPON TO SUPPORT HIS FLIGHT, THE EXILED PRINCE OF ASGARD SWIFTLY PLUMMETS--
--EVEN AS MIGHTY MJOLNIR COMPLETES ITS APPOINTED TASK--
KROOM!
--AND ARCS SKYWARD ONCE MORE--
--RETURNING, AS EVER IT MUST, TO ITS MASTER'S HAND!
WITH AN ALMOST-ABNORMAL RESOLVE, THE THUNDER GOD CONTINUES HIS AIRBORNE ASSAULT--
--EVEN AS THE FEARSOME FIRELORD PUTS THE FEW REMAINING COSTA VERDEAN SOLDIERS TO ROUT!
FLEE, AMIGOS--FLEE! NOTHING HUMAN CAN STAND AGAINST MONSTERS SUCH AS THESE!
CHOOM!
THE ARMY IS IN FULL RETREAT, SWEET GYPSY! YOUR WITLESS PAWNS HAVE SERVED US VERY WELL INDEED--
--EVEN BETTER THAN EXPECTED!
SUCH IS THE SPELL I HAVE WOVEN ABOUT THEM THAT THEY ACTUALLY BELIEVE THAT POOR, FAT, BENEVOLENT FOOL ELMIREZ IS THE CRUEL DICTATOR I'VE TOLD THEM HE IS--
--AND SO LONG AS THEY BELIEVE ME, THEY WILL DO WHATEVER I COMMAND, EL LOBO!
THEN SUMMON THEM BACK, GYPSY. THEY'VE INFLICTED DAMAGE ENOUGH FOR ONE DAY!

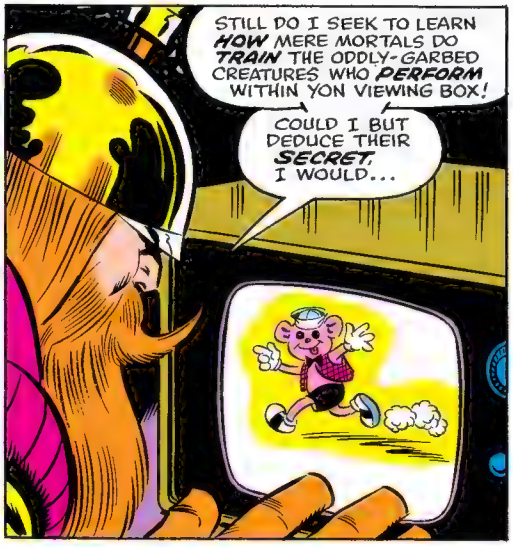

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF YOUR GOLDEN-HAIRED HERO NOW, WOMAN? NOT A VERY PRETTY SIGHT TO SEE HIM ACT THIS WAY, IS IT?
BUT THAT IS THE WAY HE WILL ACT, SO LONG AS IT SERVES OUR PURPOSES!
"WITH THE POWER OF BOTH THOR AND THE FIRELORD BESIDE US, WE SHALL STAND ON THE STEPS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE BY THIS TIME TOMORROW!"
THEN IF I'M GOING TO FREE THOR FROM THAT GYPSY WITCH'S SPELL, IT HAS TO BE-- TONIGHT!
AND AS THE CAPTIVE JANE FOSTER PLOTS HER NEXT MOVE--
--PLOTTING OF A WHOLLY DIFFERENT SORT IS COMING TO A HEAD IN THE ROYAL THRONE ROOM OF IMMORTAL ASGARD!
THOU DIDST SUMMON ME, SIRE?
AYE, BRAVE BALDER-- THOU HAST LEAVE TO APPROACH THE PRESENCE!
THY LIEGE HATH BUSINESS MOST GRIM TO DISCUSS WITH THEE.
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND, MILORD.
'TIS SIMPLE, BALDER, THE NOBLE IGRON, MY MOST TRUSTED ADVISOR, HATH CHARGED THEE WITH BLACK TREASON-- WITH PLOTTING TO OVERTHROW THE THRONE OF THE REALM ETERNAL!
HOW DOST THOU PLEAD TO THESE ACCUSATIONS, BALDER?
MY SWORD, MY LIFE, MY VERY SOUL ARE PLEDGED TO SERVE IMMORTAL ASGARD-- AND HE WHO IS TRULY THE THE GOLDEN REALM INCARNATE--
--BUT STILL DO I MOST HUMBLY FEEL THAT THOU HAST BEEN LED TERRIBLY ASTRAY, MOST HIGH.

THOUGH THOU DOST CALL HIM THINE ADVISOR, IGNOBLE IGRON DOTH SERVE NO CAUSE SAVE HIS OWN!
METHINKS-- AS DO MANY OTHERS-- THE SLY ONE HATH TURNED THEE AGAINST THINE OWN BEST JUDGMENT!
THUS IF MY WORDS HAVE BEEN IN DEFIANCE OF ANY-ONE, MILORD-- 'TIS OF IGRON, NOT OF THEE!
HELA TAKE HIM, HE KNOWS TOO MUCH!
WE'D BEST IMPRISON HIM UNTIL WE CAN FORCE HIM TO TELL US WHO STANDS BEHIND HIM IN REBELLION!
AYE, IGRON-- THOU DOST VOICE MINE OWN THOUGHTS EXACTLY!
THUS DO I FIND THE ONCE-BRAVE BALDER GUILTY AS CHARGED--
-- AND ORDER HIM CHAINED IN THE DUNGEONS BELOW THE PALACE ROYAL, THERE TO AWAIT MY JUSTICE!
I HAVE SPOKEN!!
MILORD, THOU HAST TRULY TAKEN LEAVE OF THY SENSES--
--AND EVEN THE LOYAL BALDER IS NOT BOUND TO OBEY THE RAVINGS OF A MADMAN!
THOU DOST DARE TO CALL THE ALL-FATHER MAD, CHURL?
THEN THOU SHALT NOT LIVE TO FACE LORD ODIN'S JUSTICE, BALDER!
THOU SHALT PERISH WHERE THOU DOST STAND!
THEN HAVE AT THEE, WARRIORS OF ASGARD!
SPANG!
CHANG!
THOU SHALT FIND THE BLOOD OF BALDER THE BRAVE FAR TOO PRECIOUS FOR THE TAKING!
BACK, I SAY YE-- BACK!
THE LAST VOICE OF SANITY IN THE REALM ETERNAL WILL NOT BE EASILY STILLED!
BUT I AM GREATLY OUT-NUMBERED --AND IF I BE SLAIN, THEN WHO SHALL REMAIN TO TELL THE MIGHTY THOR OF HIS FATHER'S AFFLICTION?

CURSE THE FICKLE FATES!
THOUGH NE'ER BEFORE HATH BALDER TURNED AND FLED IN THE FACE OF BATTLE--
--NOW, FOR THE SAKE OF THE REALM ETERNAL-- I MUST!

SWIFTLY, ERE THE ALARM CAN BE SPREAD O'ER ALL THE GOLDEN REALM, MUST I HIE ME TO MIDGARD--
--THERE TO SUMMON HOME THE THUNDER GOD AND HIS THREE COMPANIONS!
BUT WHEN WE RETURN, I FEAR SON MUST BATTLE FATHER-- MAYHAP EVEN UNTO DEATH!

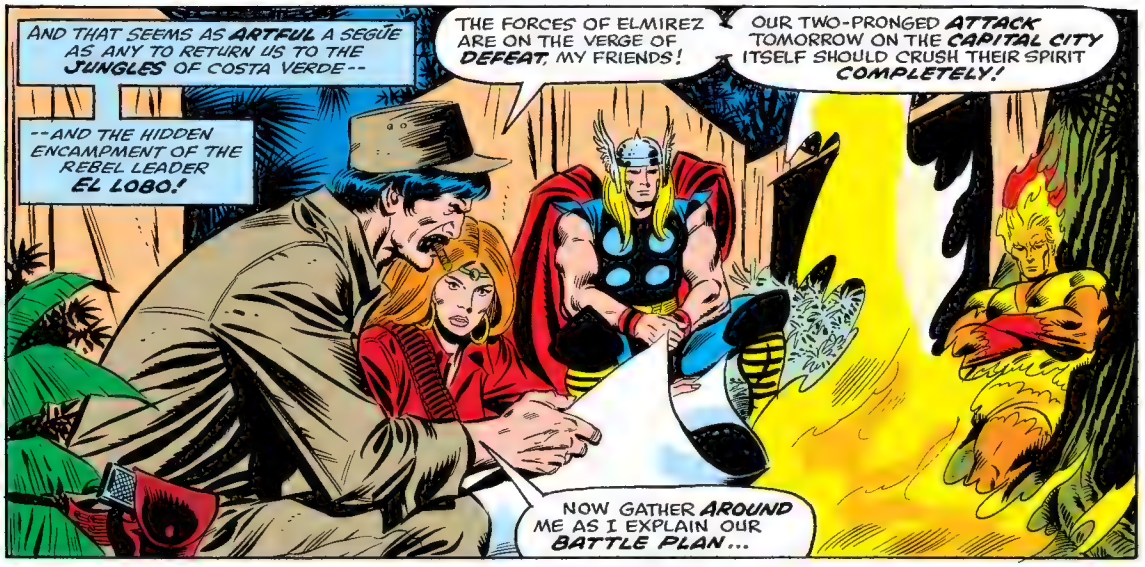

WHILE, ON THE AFOREMENTIONED MIDGARD (COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS EARTH)...
BY ODIN, WHAT DOTH DISTRACT THEE NOW, VAST VOLSTAGG?
A PUZZLEMENT MOST PASSING STRANGE, FRIEND FANDRAL.


STILL DO I SEEK TO LEARN HOW MERE MORTALS DO TRAIN THE ODDLY-GARBED CREATURES WHO PERFORM WITHIN YON VIEWING BOX!
COULD I BUT DEDUCE THEIR SECRET, I WOULD...

PRITHEE, VAST ONE-- CONTAIN THINE ALL-CONSUMING CURIOSITY! THE CITY OF NEW YORK DOTH AWAIT OUR PLEASURE--AND I FOR ONE WOULD BE ON WITH IT!
WHAT--? UNHAND ME, I SAY! THE LION OF ASGARD WILL NOT BE SO SHABBILY TREATED!
NEWS BULLETIN
RELEASE ME SWIFTLY--OR FACE VOLSTAGG'S THUNDEROUS WRATH!

PROTESTING LOUDLY AS ONLY HE CAN, THE VOLUMINOUS ONE IS LED AWAY BY HIS FRIENDS, HIS STENTORIAN TONES SMOTHERING THE VOICE OF THE TELEVISION NEWSCASTER--
--WHICH IS, IN ITS WAY, QUITE A SHAME!
ABC
...AN UNEXPECTED TURN OF EVENTS OCCURRED TODAY IN BATTLE-RAVAGED COSTA VERDE...

THE HAMMER-WIELDING THOR, SUPPOSED INCARNATION OF THE NORSE THUNDER GOD, HAS JOINED THE MYSTERIOUS FIRELORD AT THE VANGUARD OF THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES...
...AND IT APPEARS COSTA VERDE'S HOURS OF FREEDOM ARE NUMBERED!


AND THAT SEEMS AS ARTFUL A SEGÜE AS ANY TO RETURN US TO THE JUNGLES OF COSTA VERDE--
--AND THE HIDDEN ENCAMPMENT OF THE REBEL LEADER EL LOBO!
THE FORCES OF ELMIREZ ARE ON THE VERGE OF DEFEAT, MY FRIENDS!
OUR TWO-PRONGED ATTACK TOMORROW ON THE CAPITAL CITY ITSELF SHOULD CRUSH THEIR SPIRIT COMPLETELY!
NOW GATHER AROUND ME AS I EXPLAIN OUR BATTLE PLAN...

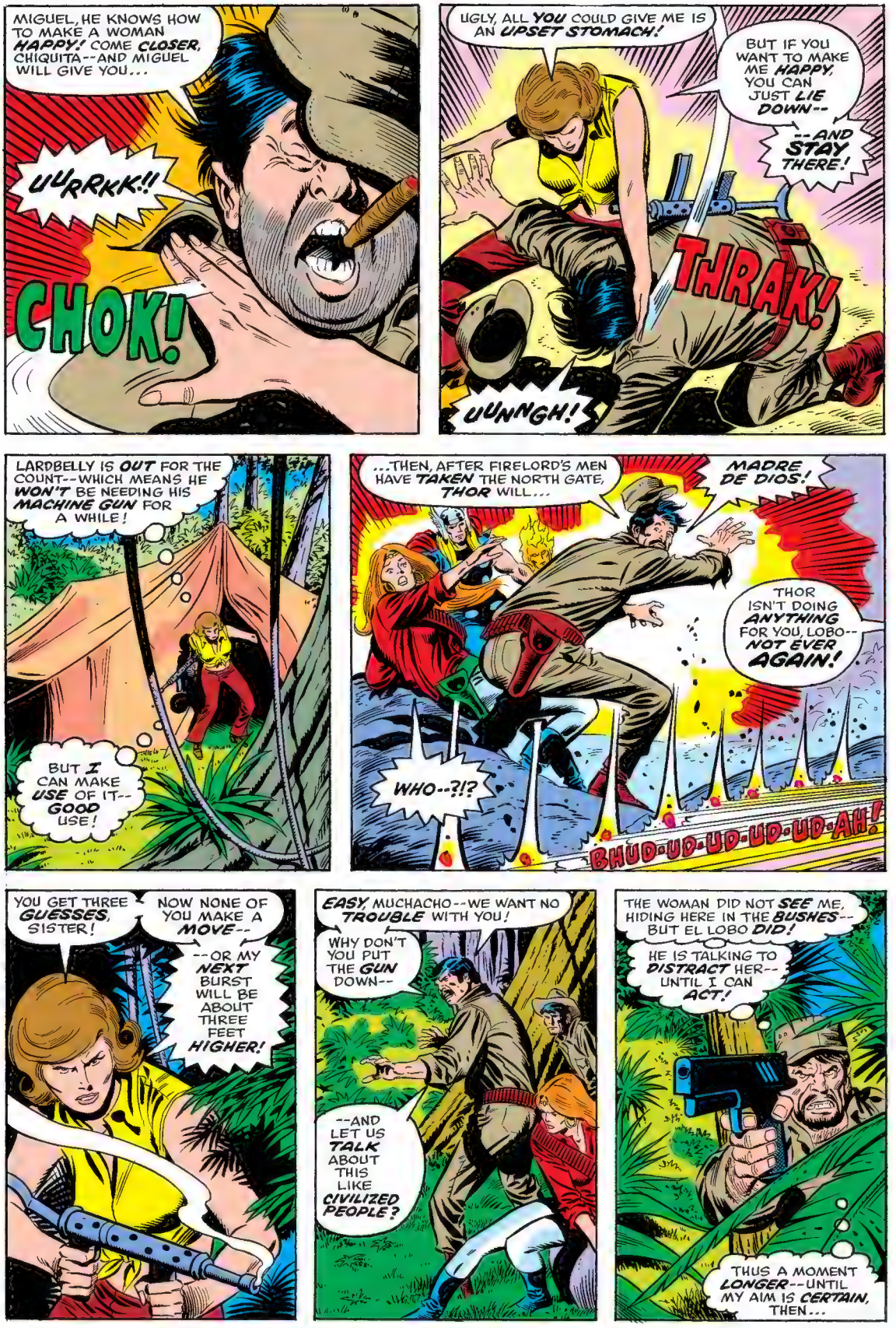
AND SINCE WE ARE NOT PERMITTED TO SIT IN ON SUCH A SECRET MEETING, WE MIGHT AS WELL TURN OUR ATTENTION TO A SMALL TENT ON THE VERY EDGE OF THE CAMP--

--WHERE A DESPERATE JANE FOSTER IS PREPARING TO INITIATE A LITTLE MILITARY ACTION OF HER OWN...
THAT FAT PIG MIGUEL IS STILL GUARDING MY DOOR--
--SO IF I'M GOING TO RESCUE MY DARLING, I'LL HAVE TO GET PAST HIM FIRST!

AND CONSIDERING THE WAY HE'S BEEN EYEING ME ALL DAY, THAT SHOULDN'T BE DIFFICULT!
ER--MIGUEL? C-COULD YOU COME HERE FOR A MINUTE?
SI, SEÑORITA.

IS THERE SOMETHING MIGUEL CAN--AH-- DO FOR YOU, CHIQUITA?
IT MUST BE REALLY UNCOM-FORTABLE OUT THERE, MIGUEL.

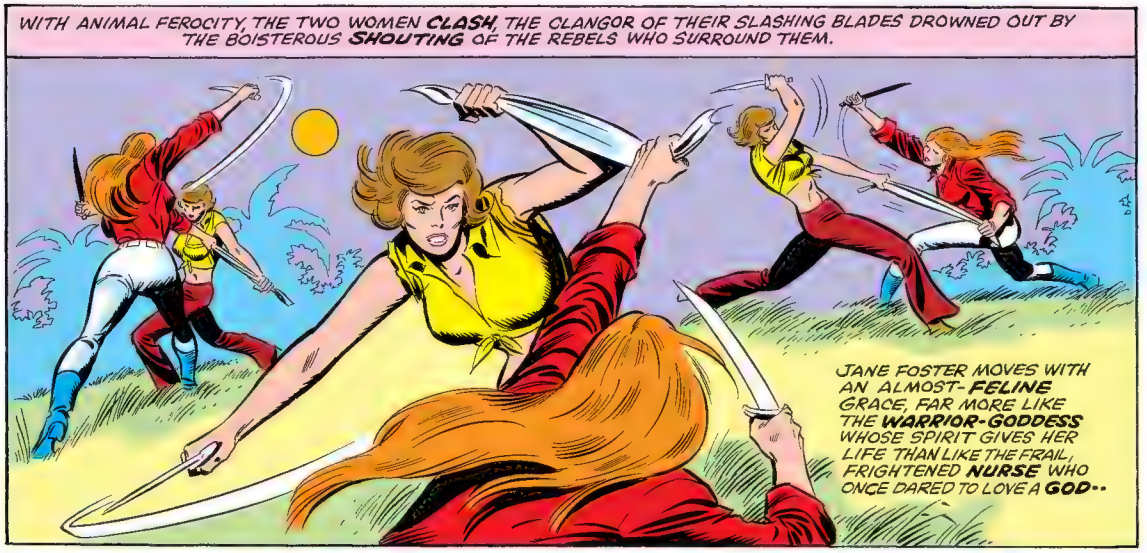
SI, CHIQUITA-- IT IS!
WELL, SINCE YOU HAVE TO GUARD ME ANYWAY, I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE MORE-- AH-- PLEASANT IF YOU GUARDED ME IN HERE!
KNOW WHAT I MEAN, HANDSOME?
SI, CHIQUITA! MIGUEL IS NO FOOL!

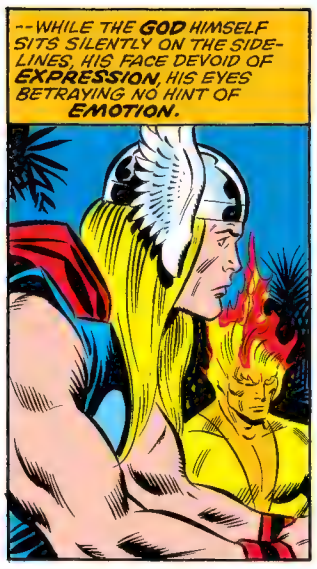

MIGUEL, HE KNOWS HOW TO MAKE A WOMAN HAPPY! COME CLOSER, CHIQUITA--AND MIGUEL WILL GIVE YOU...
UURRKK!!
CHOK!
UGLY, ALL YOU COULD GIVE ME IS AN UPSET STOMACH!
BUT IF YOU WANT TO MAKE ME HAPPY, YOU CAN JUST LIE DOWN--
--AND STAY THERE!
THRAK!
UUNNGH!
LARDBELLY IS OUT FOR THE COUNT--WHICH MEANS HE WON'T BE NEEDING HIS MACHINE GUN FOR A WHILE!
BUT I CAN MAKE USE OF IT--GOOD USE!
...THEN, AFTER FIRELORD'S MEN HAVE TAKEN THE NORTH GATE, THOR WILL...
MADRE DE DIOS!
THOR ISN'T DOING ANYTHING FOR YOU, LOBO--NOT EVER AGAIN!
WHO--?!?
BHUD-UD-UD-UD-UD-AH!
YOU GET THREE GUESSES, SISTER!
NOW NONE OF YOU MAKE A MOVE--
--OR MY NEXT BURST WILL BE ABOUT THREE FEET HIGHER!
EASY, MUCHACHO--WE WANT NO TROUBLE WITH YOU!
WHY DON'T YOU PUT THE GUN DOWN--
--AND LET US TALK ABOUT THIS LIKE CIVILIZED PEOPLE?
THE WOMAN DID NOT SEE ME, HIDING HERE IN THE BUSHES--BUT EL LOBO DID!
HE IS TALKING TO DISTRACT HER--UNTIL I CAN ACT!
THUS A MOMENT LONGER--UNTIL MY AIM IS CERTAIN, THEN...

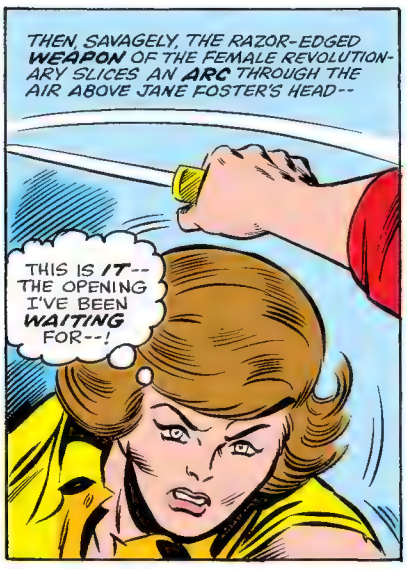
AARRGGHH!!
B-DOW!
CARAMBA! THAT WOMAN, SHE HAS EYES LIKE A CAT!
I WARNED YOU ANIMALS ONCE!
I WON'T WARN YOU AGAIN!
I SWEAR TO GOD I'LL SHOOT THE NEXT ONE OF YOU WHO MOVES!
DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME? DO YOU?
SI, JANE FOSTER-- WE UNDERSTAND.
NOW WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM US?
I'D HAVE THOUGHT THE ANSWER TO THAT WOULD BE OBVIOUS!
I WANT THOR!
I WANT MY DARLING BACK-- FREE OF GYPSY'S SPELL!
AND IF GYPSY REFUSES TO RELEASE HIM?
WHY DON'T YOU LET HER MAKE THAT DECISION HERSELF?
IF I HAVE TO, I'LL FIGHT HER TO REGAIN THE MAN I LOVE!
FIGHT YOU, LITTLE GIRL? DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!
I WOULD NOT EVEN SOIL MY HANDS ON YOU!
YOU HAVE BEEN CHALLENGED, GYPSY! IF I WERE YOU, I WOULD NOT BACK DOWN!
IT WOULD NOT DO YOU GOOD TO LOSE FACE IN THE EYES OF MY MEN!
THEN I WILL FIGHT HER, ACCORDING TO THE ANCIENT RULES--
--AND I WILL TEAR HER APART, AS THE WOLF DEVOURS THE LAMB!

YOUR WEAPON WILL BE THE KNIFE -- AND YOU WILL EACH HOLD ONE END OF THIS BANDANA!
WHOEVER LETS GO OF THE BANDANA FIRST LOSES THE CONTEST -- AND HER LIFE!
THOSE ARE THE ONLY RULES! IS THAT CLEAR?
LET'S GET ON WITH THIS ALREADY! WE HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO WHEN THIS IS OVER!

THEN SWIFTLY -- LET THE BATTLE BEGIN!
AND JUST AS SWIFTLY WILL IT BE ENDED!


WITH ANIMAL FEROCITY, THE TWO WOMEN CLASH, THE CLANGOR OF THEIR SLASHING BLADES DROWNED OUT BY THE BOISTEROUS SHOUTING OF THE REBELS WHO SURROUND THEM.
JANE FOSTER MOVES WITH AN ALMOST-FELINE GRACE, FAR MORE LIKE THE WARRIOR-GODDESS WHOSE SPIRIT GIVES HER LIFE THAN LIKE THE FRAIL, FRIGHTENED NURSE WHO ONCE DARED TO LOVE A GOD--


--WHILE THE GOD HIMSELF SITS SILENTLY ON THE SIDE-LINES, HIS FACE DEVOID OF EXPRESSION, HIS EYES BETRAYING NO HINT OF EMOTION.


THEN, SAVAGELY, THE RAZOR-EDGED WEAPON OF THE FEMALE REVOLUTION-ARY SLICES AN ARC THROUGH THE AIR ABOVE JANE FOSTER'S HEAD--
THIS IS IT -- THE OPENING I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR--!

--AND WITH A SUDDEN VIOLENT SWEEP OF JANE'S LITHELY-MUSCLED LEG --

--THE WOMAN CALLED GYPSY TOPPLES TO THE MOSS-GREEN EARTH--
NO--YOU TRIPPED ME--!
--AND THE BATTLE IS OVER!
THE RULES SAID NO HOLDS BARRED, SISTER!
NOW EITHER YOU SURRENDER AND RELEASE THOR FROM YOUR SPELL--
--OR I WILL GLADLY SLIT YOUR SLIMY THROAT!
NO--I WILL NOT BE HUMILIATED LIKE THIS!
AMIGOS, ARE YOU MEN--OR DOGS?
KILL THIS WOMAN QUICKLY--OR THE REVOLUTION IS LOST!
YOUR TONE IS THAT OF A FRIGHTENED CHILD, GYPSY--BUT YOUR WORDS ARE TRUE!
WITHOUT THOR AND THE FIRELORD BESIDE US, WE CANNOT HOPE TO OVERTHROW ELMIREZ--
--AND FOR THAT REASON ALONE--JANE FOSTER MUST DIE!
IMPASSIVELY, THE GOD OF THUNDER WATCHES THE REBEL'S FINGER TIGHTEN UPON THE TRIGGER--
--THEN, SUDDENLY, HIS BROW IS CREASED BY THE SLIGHTEST FURROW OF DOUBT.
DESPITE SWEET GYPSY'S WORDS, THERE IS A REASON THIS WOMAN SHOULD NOT DIE--
--IF ONLY HE COULD REMEMBER WHAT IT IS.

THEN, SUDDENLY...
NAY!
NO LONGER WILL THOR SIT IDLY BY, AS ANOTHER'S MINDLESS SLAVE!
"NOW ONCE MORE AM I GOD OF THUNDER, MASTER OF THE URU HAMMER MJOLNIR--
CHOOM!
"--AND WOE BE UNTO ANYONE WHO DARES THREATEN THOR'S TRULY BELOVED!"
NO! PUT YOUR HAMMER DOWN, THOR!
OBEY ME, CURSE YOUR EYES-- OBEY ME!!
MADRE DE DIOS! I-IT'S NOT POSSIBLE--! THE THUNDER GOD HAS BROKEN MY SPELL!
BUT NOTHING THAT LIVES CAN DEFY THE POWER OF MY MIND-JEWEL!
SO THAT'S HOW YOU DO IT, HEY?
THIS LITTLE BAUBLE YOU'RE WEARING IS RIGGED!
NO--DON'T TOUCH IT! LEAVE IT ALONE!
NOT A CHANCE, SISTER!
I WANT TO SEE HOW YOU TWIST MEN AROUND YOUR LITTLE FINGER WITHOUT USING THIS FANCY JUNK-JEWELRY OF YOURS!

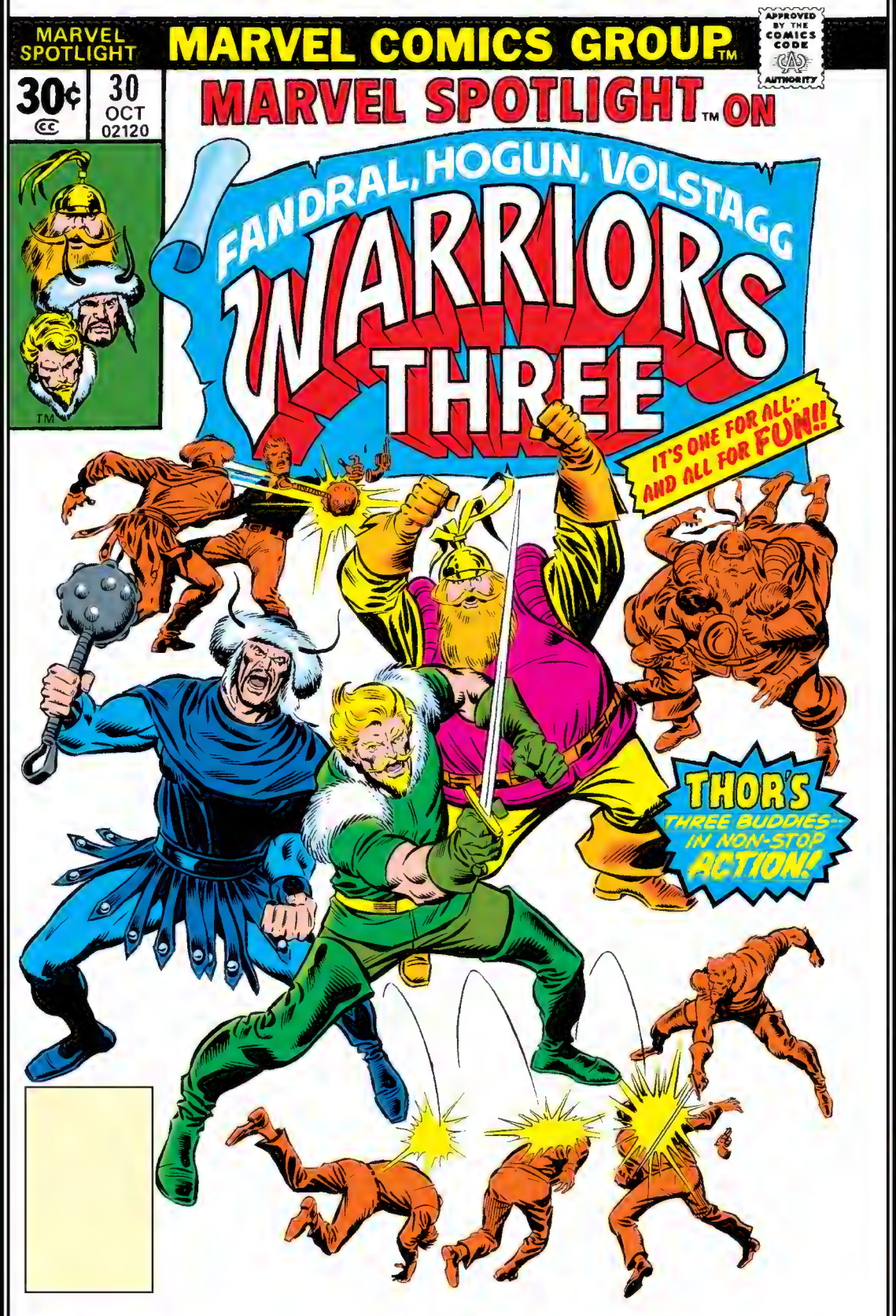
POR DIOS--NO! SINCE IT FELL FROM THE SKIES CENTURIES AGO, THAT GEM HAS BEEN IN MY FAMILY!
IT BELONGED TO MY MOTHER, AND HER MOTHER BEFORE HER--!
FIRELORD, YOU MUST SAVE IT-- BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!
AS YOU WISH, GYPSY.
THE FLAMES OF THIS CAMPFIRE ARE AS NOTHING TO ONE WHO HAS SOARED THRU THE VERY HEARTS OF BLAZING SUNS!
THERE! YOUR PRECIOUS GEM IS SAFE!
THEN GIVE IT TO ME, YOU FOOL--QUICKLY!
THERE IS NO TIME TO WASTE!
GIVE IT TO ME, DO YOU HEAR ME?
GIVE IT TO ME!!
NO.
KKRUUNNCHH!
WITHOUT THE POWER OF YOUR GEM TO BLIND ME, WOMAN, I HAVE JUST SEEN YOU FOR THE FIRST TIME AS YOU TRULY ARE--
--AND I DO NOT LIKE WHAT I SEE!
THEN... ALL IS LOST!
THE WOMAN HAS FAILED, MI AMIGOS! NOW IT IS ALL UP TO US!
SWIFTLY--BEFORE THOR AND THE FIRELORD CAN FULLY REGAIN THEIR SENSES-- ATTACK THEM!!
KILL THEM BOTH!!

GET THEE BEHIND ME, MILADY! THOU HAST DONE THY SHARE!
NOW LET THE MIGHT OF MINE MYSTIC MALLET DEAL WITH YON MORTALS' FEEBLE FIREARMS!
SPAK AK AK AK AK AK
BUT IT APPEARS THEY ARE USING MORE THAN SIMPLE HAND WEAPONS, ASGARDIAN!
THEY'RE ATTACKING US WITH THE VERY WAR MACHINES WE HELPED THEM CAPTURE FROM ELMIREZ!
SLAGG!
BUT THE JUGGERNAUT HAS NOT BEEN BUILT THAT CAN WITHSTAND THE COSMIC FURY OF MY FIRESTAFF!
KEEP FIRING, ESTUPIDOS!
CUT THEM DOWN-- OR THE REVOLUTION IS LOST!
VOOMP!
LAY DOWN THINE ARMS, CHURLS, ERE I MUST...
AARRGGH!!
BWHOOM!
A TRIUMPHANT SHOUT RISES FROM THE REBEL RANKS WHEN THE SMOKE AT LAST CLEARS, TO REVEAL THE THUNDER GOD SPRAWLED UNMOVING IN THE DIRT--
--BUT IT IS A CHEER THAT CATCHES IN THEIR THROATS, WHEN THE GOLDEN-MANED HEAD LIFTS GRIMLY FROM THE RUBBLE--
--FIERCE DETERMINATION FAIRLY BLAZING IN SKY-BLUE EYES!

AGAIN, FOOLS-- BEFORE THE BLONDHAIR GETS TO HIS FEET!
SHOOT HIM! SHOOT HIM!!
WHUMP!
FOUL MORTAL, THOR DOTH SAY THEE... NAY!
NEVER AGAIN SHALT THOU BRING THE THUNDER GOD TO HIS KNEES--
--UNLESS THOU DOST INTEND TO BEAT HIM DOWN WITH SCRAP!
SKRAKKT!
DESPITE YOUR FANCY CLOTHING, YOUR STRANGE MANNER OF SPEECH, YOUR ACCURSED HAMMER, YOU ARE STILL ONLY ONE MAN AGAINST MANY, BLONDHAIR--
--AND, EVENTUALLY, OUR SHEER FORCE OF NUMBERS MUST PREVAIL!
NAY, EL LOBO-- 'TIS THERE THAT THOU ART WRONG!
FOR THOR IS NOT A MAN AT ALL--
--BUT THE IMMORTAL GOD OF THUNDER--
--MASTER OF THE ENCHANTED HAMMER MJOLNIR--
--RULER OF THE WIND AND THE RAGING STORM--
"--AND NAUGHT THAT LIVES MAY DEFY THE ODINSON'S POWER--
"--OR THE WHIRLWIND THAT IS HIS TO COMMAND!"

THOU WOULDST DO WELL TO DWELL ON THY MISTAKES, EL LOBO--
--WHEN THOU DOST FINALLY REGAIN THY SENSES!
OH, DARLING--I WAS SO WORRIED. Y-YOU'RE ALL RIGHT NOW, AREN'T YOU?
WE ARE BOTH ALL RIGHT, JANE FOSTER--THANKS TO YOU. YOU ARE A MOST EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN.
INDEED SHE IS, FIRE-LORD--BUT OUR PROBLEMS ARE NOT YET OVER.
WHAT DO WE DO NOW WITH EL LOBO AND HIS MINIONS?
WHILE, AT COSTA VERDE'S PRESIDENTIAL PALACE...
THE COURTYARD IS FILLED WITH OUR MOST ABLE SOLDIERS, EL PRESIDENTE!
WHEN EL LOBO ATTACKS, WE WILL BE READY!
EL PRESIDENTE, ARE YOU WELL?
EH? OH, FORGIVE ME, PEDRO. I WAS JUST THINKING--TRYING TO IMAGINE WHAT THAT FIEND EL LOBO WILL DO TO OUR POOR PEOPLE IF WE LOSE THIS FINAL BATTLE...
...LET ALONE WHAT HE WILL DO TO ME!
OUR PEOPLE ARE SUCH INNOCENT LAMBS, PEDRO. IT WILL DESTROY THEM IF...
WHAT--? TH-THAT SOUND OUTSIDE THE WINDOW--LIKE THE HOWLING OF A TERRIBLE WIND!
MADRE DE DIOS! IT IS A TORNADO--AND IT IS HEADING THIS WAY!
DID WE NOT HAVE ENOUGH TROUBLES WITHOUT ADDING THIS?
WHY, POR DIOS? WHY??
WELL, FRANKLY, PRESIDENT ELMIREZ--THE ANSWER IS ONE YOU WILL PROBABLY NOT BELIEVE!
BUT THE CYCLONE HAS ONLY STOPPED BY TO MAKE A DELIVERY!

AND, HAVING DEPOSITED ITS UNSAVORY CARGO SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PALACE COURTYARD, THE WHIRLWIND SUDDENLY SHIMMERS--
--AND IS GONE!
PUT YOUR HANDS OVER YOUR HEADS, ALL OF YOU-- SWIFTLY!
P-PLEASE-- DO NOT SHOOT! W-WE SURRENDER!
WE HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO FIGHT FOR, ANYWAY!
WH-WHAT IS ALL THE COMMOTION? IS IT...MADRE DE MI!
EL LOBO AND HIS REBELS-- DELIVERED RIGHT INTO OUR HANDS--!
BUT HOW--?!?
'TWAS THE VERY LEAST WE COULD DO, MORTAL.
THOR-- AND THE FLAME-HAIRED ONE CALLED FIRELORD--?!?
YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS?
I DID PROMISE THEE TO DELIVER THY LAND FROM THE VILLAINOUS EL LOBO--
--AND THE THUNDER GOD DOTH NOT TAKE HIS VOWS LIGHTLY.
I--I DO NOT UNDERSTAND MUCH OF THIS-- BUT THAT IS NOT UNUSUAL.
I KNOW ONLY THAT COSTA VERDE IS DEEPLY IN YOUR DEBT--
--AND THAT YOU HAVE THE BLESSINGS OF A MOST GRATEFUL PEOPLE!
'TIS MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR THOR, MORTAL--
--BUT WHAT OF THEE, FIRELORD?
I HAVE LITTLE USE FOR GRATITUDE, ASGARDIAN--
--OR FOR MANKIND ITSELF, FOR THAT MATTER!
SO I WILL BID YOU FAREWELL, THUNDER GOD--
--UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN!
DO YOU THINK WE REALLY WILL SEE HIM AGAIN, DARLING?
I'VE NO DOUBT, JANE. SOMEHOW FIRELORD SEEMS STRANGELY BOUND TO THIS PALE GREEN PLANET--
--AND HE MUST KEEP SEARCHING UNTIL HE LEARNS THE REASON WHY!
NEXT
JOIN FANDRAL, HOGUN, AND VOLSTAGG IN MARVEL SPOTLIGHT #28 FOR "WARRIORS THREE"
THEN BE BACK HERE NEXT MONTH FOR THE BEGINNING OF AN EPIC! JOIN US FOR...
"THERE SHALL COME... REVOLUTION!"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MARVEL SPOTLIGHT™ ON
FANDRAL, HOGUN, VOLSTAGG
WARRIORS THREE
IT'S ONE FOR ALL.. AND ALL FOR FUN!!
THOR'S THREE BUDDIES-- IN NON-STOP ACTION!

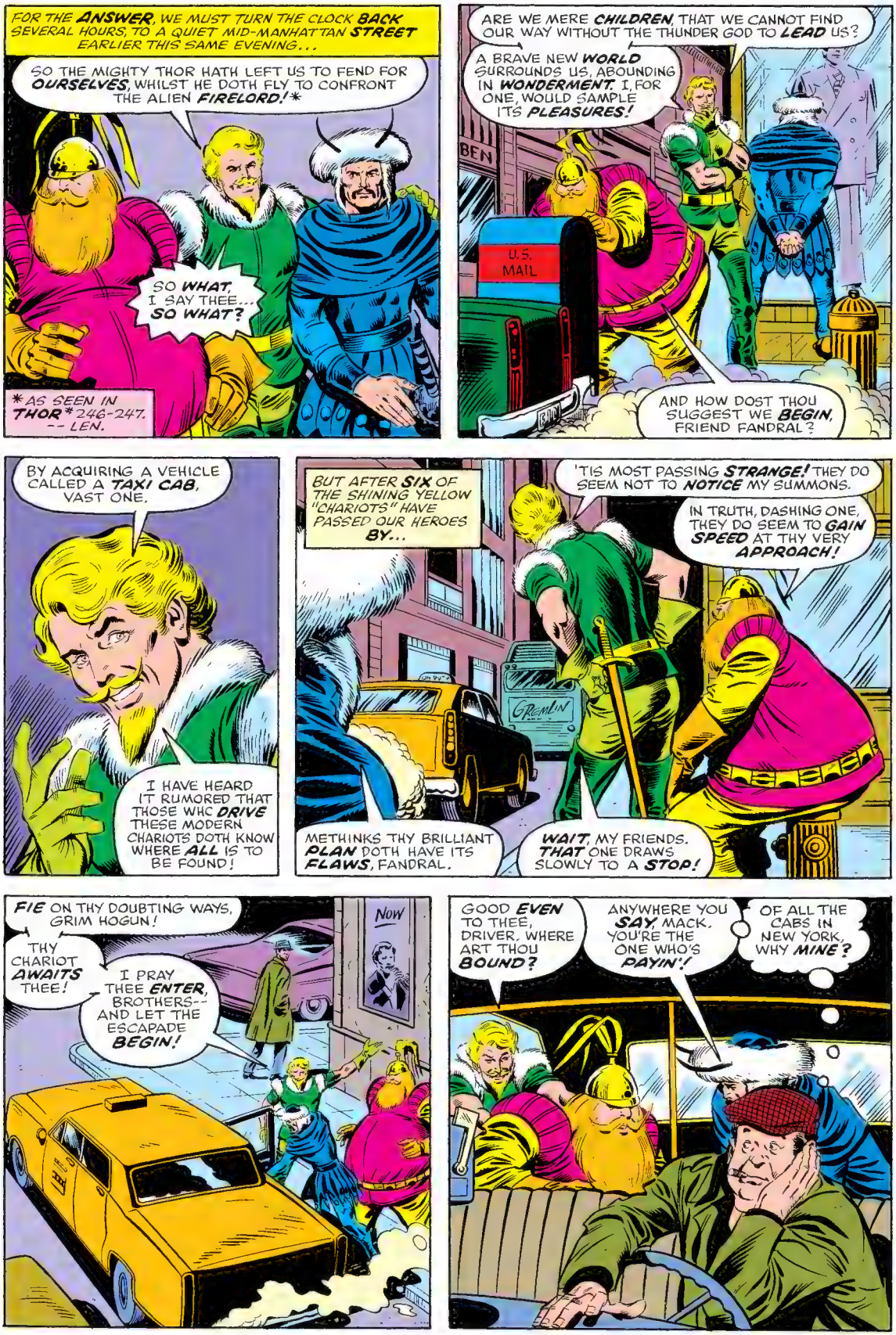
Stan Lee PRESENTS: WARRIORS THREE! ™

T/213

LEN WEIN — WRITER/EDITOR | JOHN BUSCEMA & JOE SINNOTT — ILLUSTRATORS | GLYNIS WEIN — COLORIST | JOE ROSEN — LETTERER | IRV FORBUSH — HONORARY GODLING

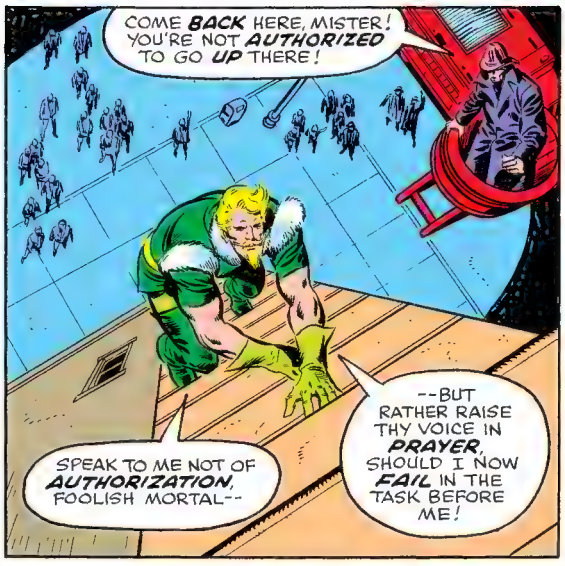
A NIGHT ON THE TOWN!

THE PLACE IS A SLEAZY WATERFRONT BAR, REEKING OF CHEAP CIGARETTE SMOKE AND EVEN CHEAPER BOOZE, AND THE SCENE IS NOT AT ALL UNCOMMON FOR AN ESTABLISHMENT SUCH AS THIS--
--EXCEPT, OF COURSE, FOR THE THREE GAUDILY-GARBED GENTLEMEN CURRENTLY HOLDING THE UPPER HAND IN THIS NO-HOLDS-BARRED BATTLE!
230
FOR THE RECORD, THEIR NAMES ARE FANDRAL the Dashing, HOGUN the Grim, AND VOLSTAGG the Voluminous. THEY ARE THE THREE CLOSEST COMPANIONS OF THE MIGHTY THOR...
...AND YOU MAY BE WONDERING HOW THEY GOT INTO A SITUATION LIKE THIS!!

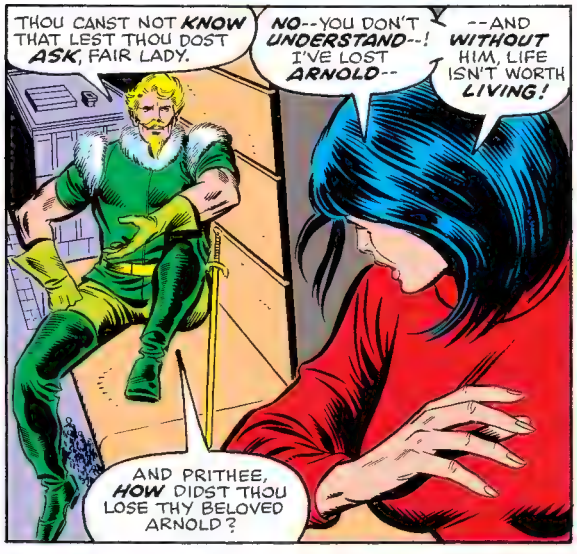

FOR THE ANSWER, WE MUST TURN THE CLOCK BACK SEVERAL HOURS, TO A QUIET MID-MANHATTAN STREET EARLIER THIS SAME EVENING...
SO THE MIGHTY THOR HATH LEFT US TO FEND FOR OURSELVES, WHILST HE DOTH FLY TO CONFRONT THE ALIEN FIRELORD!*
SO WHAT, I SAY THEE... SO WHAT?
AS SEEN IN THOR 246-247. -- LEN.
ARE WE MERE CHILDREN, THAT WE CANNOT FIND OUR WAY WITHOUT THE THUNDER GOD TO LEAD US?
A BRAVE NEW WORLD SURROUNDS US, ABOUNDING IN WONDERMENT. I, FOR ONE, WOULD SAMPLE ITS PLEASURES!
BEN
U.S. MAIL
AND HOW DOST THOU SUGGEST WE BEGIN, FRIEND FANDRAL?
BY ACQUIRING A VEHICLE CALLED A TAXI CAB, VAST ONE.
I HAVE HEARD IT RUMORED THAT THOSE WHO DRIVE THESE MODERN CHARIOTS DOTH KNOW WHERE ALL IS TO BE FOUND!
BUT AFTER SIX OF THE SHINING YELLOW "CHARIOTS" HAVE PASSED OUR HEROES BY...
'TIS MOST PASSING STRANGE! THEY DO SEEM NOT TO NOTICE MY SUMMONS.
IN TRUTH, DASHING ONE, THEY DO SEEM TO GAIN SPEED AT THY VERY APPROACH!
GREMLIN
METHINKS THY BRILLIANT PLAN DOTH HAVE ITS FLAWS, FANDRAL.
WAIT, MY FRIENDS. THAT ONE DRAWS SLOWLY TO A STOP!
FIE ON THY DOUBTING WAYS, GRIM HOGUN!
THY CHARIOT AWAITS THEE!
I PRAY THEE ENTER, BROTHERS-- AND LET THE ESCAPADE BEGIN!
NOW
GOOD EVEN TO THEE, DRIVER. WHERE ART THOU BOUND?
ANYWHERE YOU SAY, MACK. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S PAYIN'!
OF ALL THE CABS IN NEW YORK, WHY MINE?

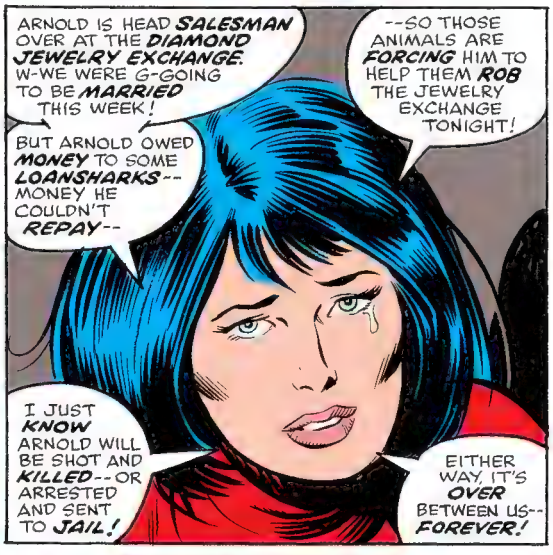
YOU GUYS GOIN' TO A COSTUME PARTY--
--OR IS THIS SOME KIND'A INITIATION STUNT?
COSTUME PARTY? INITIATION STUNT? THY WORDS ARE MOST CURIOUS INDEED, GOOD DRIVER.
WE ARE BUT THREE LONELY GODS, SEEKING ENTERTAINMENT, EXCITEMENT AND MAYHAP THE GENTLE SMILE OF A FAIR MAIDEN OR TWO.
A MILD EVENING'S DIVERSION FOR THE LION OF ASGARD, BUT 'TWILL DO...
'TWILL DO.
OH. YOU FELLAS WANNA GO WHERE THE ACTION IS!
WHY DIN'CHA SAY SO IN THE FIRST PLACE?
OKAY, YOU GENTS JUST SIT BACK AN' RELAX--
--AN' LEAVE THE DRIVIN' TA MYRON J. MAXWELL!
THERE AIN'T A HOT SPOT IN TOWN I DON'T KNOW LIKE THE WART ON THE BACK'A MY HAND!
DID I NOT TELL YE, BROTHERS? WE HAVE INDEED FOUND A GUIDE WORTHY TO LEAD US TO OUR DESIRES.
I DESIRE ONLY A BIT MORE ROOM, FANDRAL. OUR VOLUMINOUS FRIEND FAIRLY FILLS THE SEAT ENTIRE!
PFAH! A MAN'S GIRTH IS THE TRUE MEASURE OF HIS NOBILITY!
THEN, VERILY, THOU ART MORE NOBLE THAN ALL THE GODS OF GOLDEN ASGARD COMBINED.
I DON'T GET IT. THESE GUYS TALK LIKE SOMETHIN' OUTTA SHAKE-SPEARE...
...THEY DRESS LIKE REJECTS FROM SOME ROBIN HOOD FLICK...
...AND THEY CALL THEMSELVES EVER-LOVIN' GODS, FER PETE'S SAKE.
WHEN DID THEY START GIVIN' THE INMATES THE KEYS TA THE ASYLUM?
BUT MYRON J. MAXWELL'S BEWILDERED MUSINGS ARE ABRUPTLY CUT SHORT BY...
A CROWD-- MILLING ABOUT IN THE STREET?
I SAY THEE, DRIVER-- WHAT BE THE MEANING OF THIS?
YA GOT ME, MACK. TRAFFIC IS TIED UP TOO-- AN' I CAN SEE COPS AN' FIRE ENGINES AN' EVERYTHIN' UP AHEAD!
MAYBE THEY'RE FILMIN' A MOVIE OR SOMETHIN'!

MAYHAP THOU SPEAKEST A'RIGHT, DRIVER. THEY ARE SHINING GREAT LIGHTS UPON YONDER WALL-- AND YON MORTALS ARE POINTING UP AT...
BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF ODIN!
'TIS A FAIR DAMSEL IN DISTRESS!
QUICKLY, MY BROTHERS-IN-ARMS! THERE IS GREAT NEED OF US HERE!
NATURALLY, THOU SHALT AWAIT OUR RETURN, DRIVER-- OR HOGUN THE GRIM WILL KNOW THE REASON WHY!
YEAH. S-SURE. WHATEVER YA SAY, CHUM... BUT I G-GOTTA KEEP THE METER RUNNIN!
PLEASE, MISS-- GIVE ME YOUR HAND! NOBODY HERE WANTS TO HURT YOU.
WHY DOTH SO FAIR A MAIDEN STAND UPON SO PERILOUS A PERCH?
THE ANSWER DOTH BE PAINFULLY OBVIOUS TO VALOROUS VOLSTAGG!
LOOK UPON HER FACE, FRIEND FANDRAL.
CANST THOU NOT SEE THE HURT... THE UTTER DESPAIR THAT IS WRITTEN UPON IT?
"THOU DOST SEE BEFORE THEE A WOMAN WHO HATH LOST THE WILL TO LIVE!"
K-KEEP AWAY FROM ME, EVERYONE! STAY BACK!
COME ANY CLOSER AND I...
I SWEAR I'LL... I'LL JUMP!
HEY! WHERE'D'YA THINK YER GOIN', BUDDY?
THERE'S A GIRL'S LIFE AT STAKE HERE!
THEN HAVE NO FEAR, OFFICER. HER LIFE IS SAFE IN FANDRAL'S HANDS!
I PRAY THOU ART CORRECT, FRIEND HOGUN.
CZU-6
IF EVER MY GLIB TONGUE HATH SERVED ME, LET IT SERVE ME NOW!


COME BACK HERE, MISTER! YOU'RE NOT AUTHORIZED TO GO UP THERE!
SPEAK TO ME NOT OF AUTHORIZATION, FOOLISH MORTAL--
--BUT RATHER RAISE THY VOICE IN PRAYER, SHOULD I NOW FAIL IN THE TASK BEFORE ME!

H-HOW DID YOU GET UP HERE? WH-WHO ARE YOU?
I AM FANDRAL, HE OF THE FLASHING BLADE-- AND I COME TO OFFER THEE MY HAND! HOW ART THOU CALLED?
I'M MARY... MARY MILLER.
BUT THERE'S NOTHING ANYONE CAN DO TO HELP ME NOW!

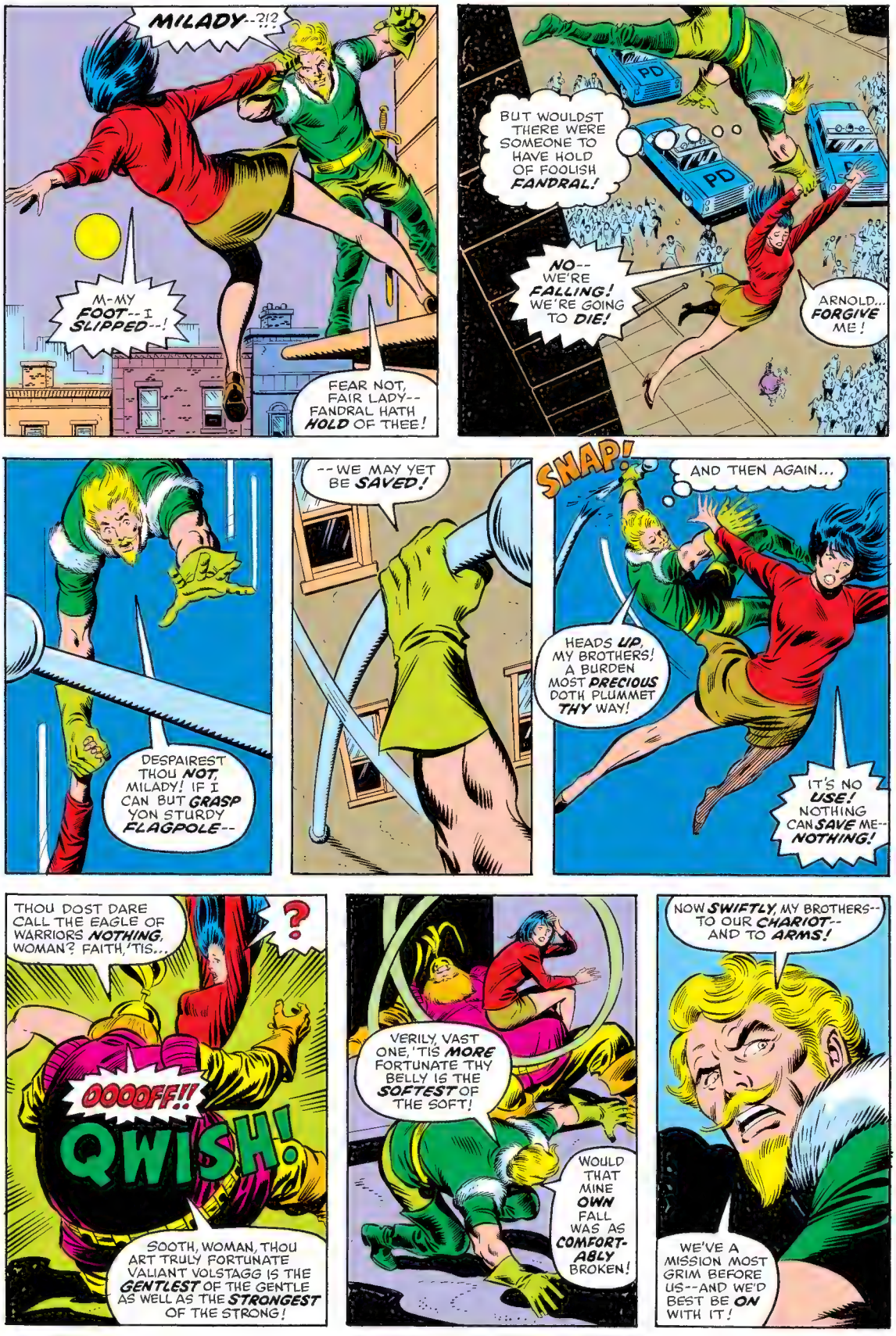

THOU CANST NOT KNOW THAT LEST THOU DOST ASK, FAIR LADY.
NO--YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND--! I'VE LOST ARNOLD--
--AND WITHOUT HIM, LIFE ISN'T WORTH LIVING!
AND PRITHEE, HOW DIDST THOU LOSE THY BELOVED ARNOLD?


ARNOLD IS HEAD SALESMAN OVER AT THE DIAMOND JEWELRY EXCHANGE. W-WE WERE G-GOING TO BE MARRIED THIS WEEK!
--SO THOSE ANIMALS ARE FORCING HIM TO HELP THEM ROB THE JEWELRY EXCHANGE TONIGHT!
BUT ARNOLD OWED MONEY TO SOME LOANSHARKS-- MONEY HE COULDN'T REPAY--
I JUST KNOW ARNOLD WILL BE SHOT AND KILLED--OR ARRESTED AND SENT TO JAIL!
EITHER WAY, IT'S OVER BETWEEN US-- FOREVER!

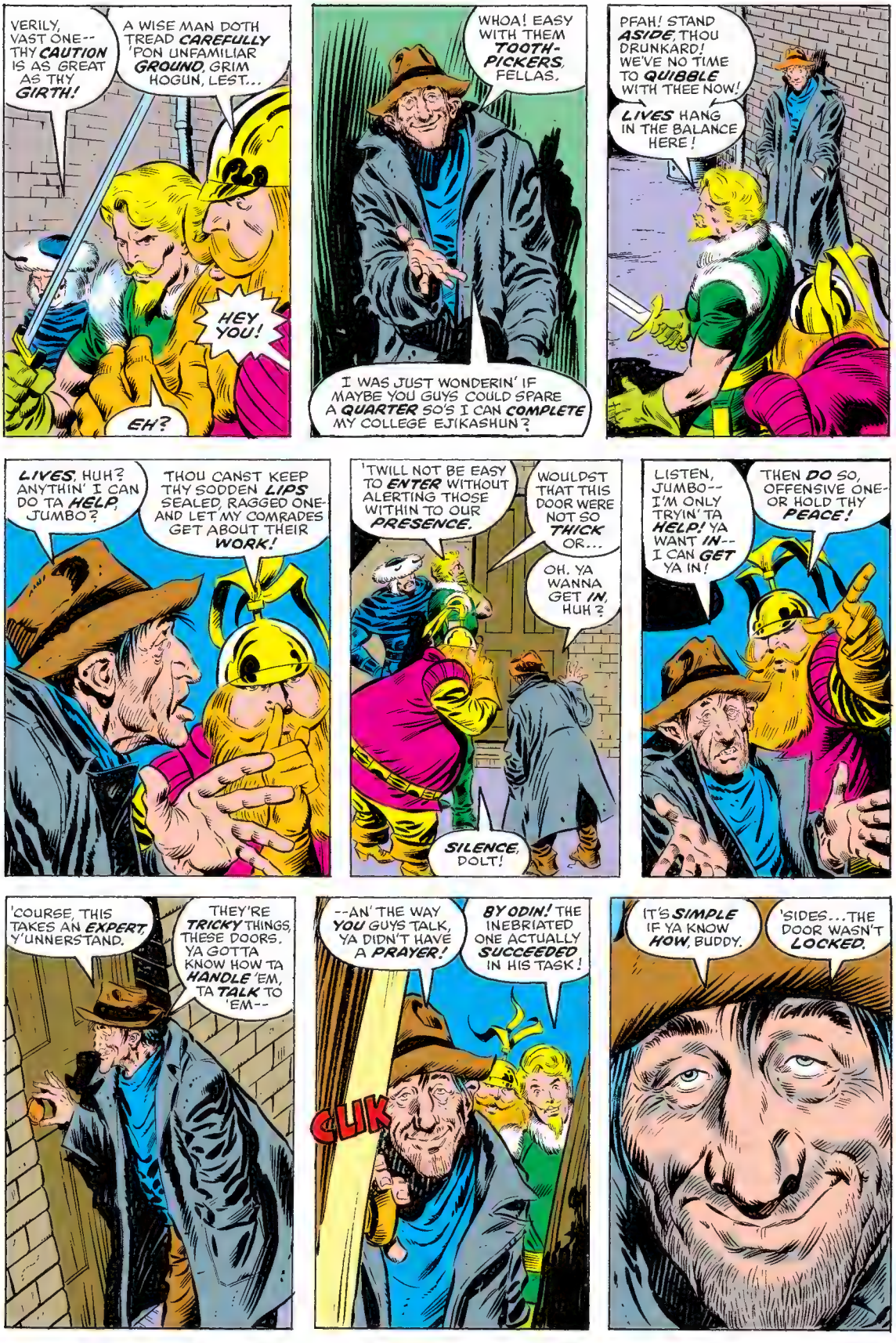
NAY, MILADY-- THOU HAST NOT LOST THINE ARNOLD YET!
MY BROTHERS-IN-ARMS AND I WILL FREE HIM FROM THE YOKE OF HIS OPPRESSORS--
--OR PERISH IN THE TRYING!

ON THAT, THOU HAST THE MOST SACRED WORD OF FANDRAL!
YOU MEAN YOU'D REALLY HELP ME--SOMEONE YOU ONLY JUST MET?
WITHOUT HESITATION, FAIR LADY.

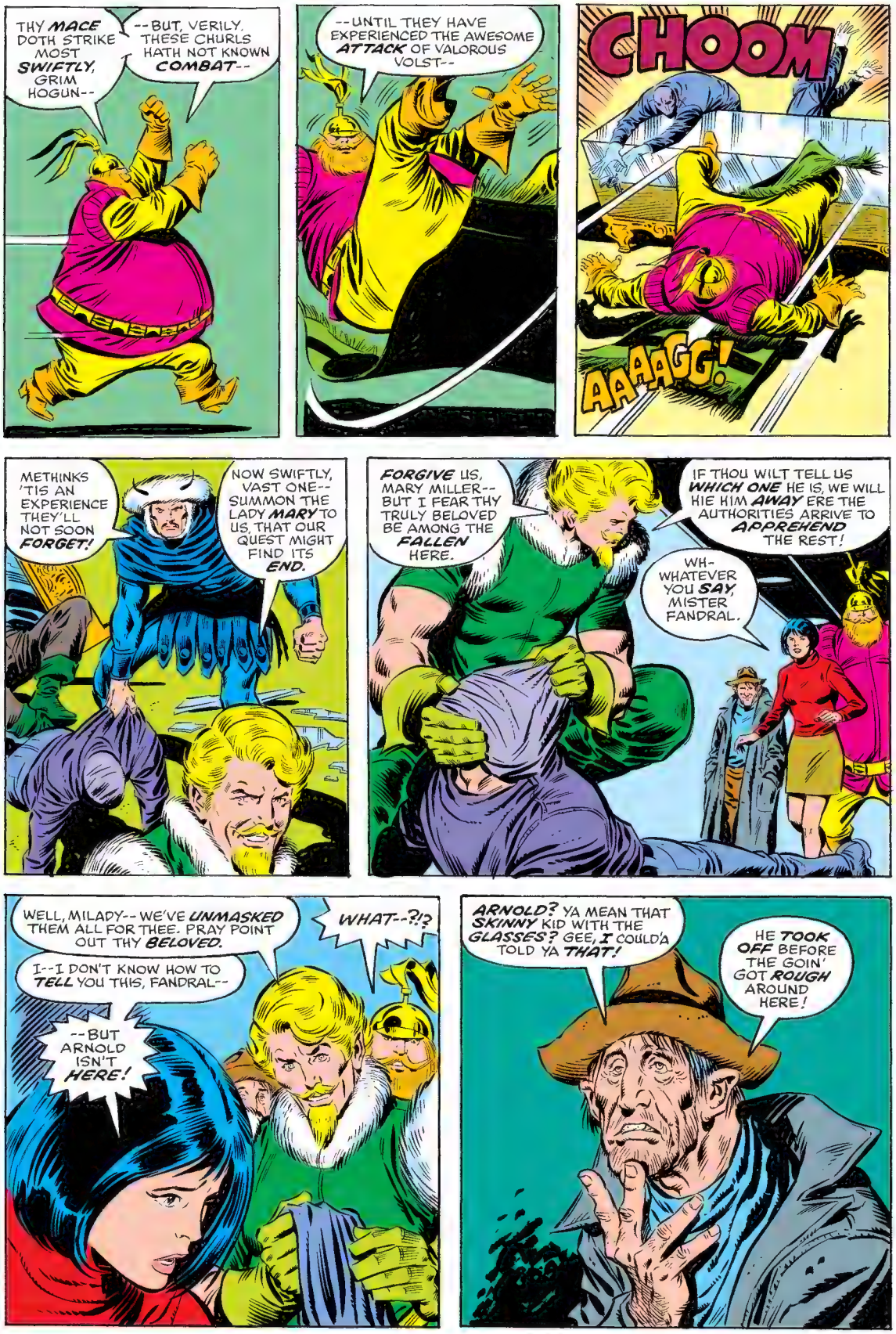
NOW PRAY GIVE ME THINE HAND, MARY MILLER--
--AND LET US GO DOWN FROM THIS MOST UNCOMFORTABLE PLACE.

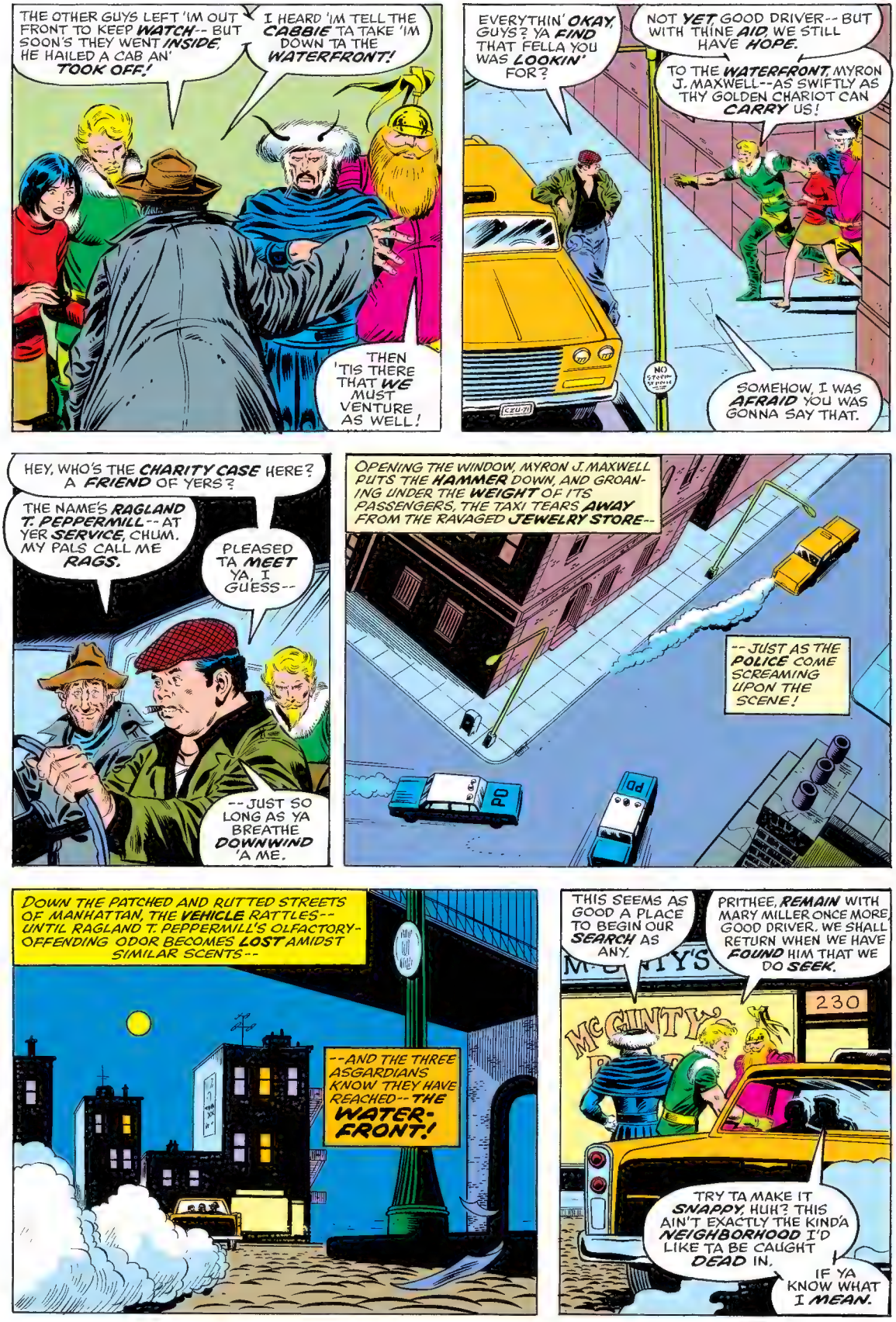

MILADY--?!?
M-MY FOOT--I SLIPPED--!
FEAR NOT, FAIR LADY--FANDRAL HATH HOLD OF THEE!
PD
PD
BUT WOULDST THERE WERE SOMEONE TO HAVE HOLD OF FOOLISH FANDRAL!
NO--WE'RE FALLING! WE'RE GOING TO DIE!
ARNOLD... FORGIVE ME!
DESPAIREST THOU NOT, MILADY! IF I CAN BUT GRASP YON STURDY FLAGPOLE--
--WE MAY YET BE SAVED!
SNAP!
AND THEN AGAIN...
HEADS UP, MY BROTHERS! A BURDEN MOST PRECIOUS DOTH PLUMMET THY WAY!
IT'S NO USE! NOTHING CAN SAVE ME--NOTHING!
THOU DOST DARE CALL THE EAGLE OF WARRIORS NOTHING, WOMAN? FAITH, 'TIS...
?
OOOOFF!!
QWISH!
SOOTH, WOMAN, THOU ART TRULY FORTUNATE VALIANT VOLSTAGG IS THE GENTLEST OF THE GENTLE AS WELL AS THE STRONGEST OF THE STRONG!
VERILY, VAST ONE, 'TIS MORE FORTUNATE THY BELLY IS THE SOFTEST OF THE SOFT!
WOULD THAT MINE OWN FALL WAS AS COMFORTABLY BROKEN!
NOW SWIFTLY, MY BROTHERS--TO OUR CHARIOT--AND TO ARMS!
WE'VE A MISSION MOST GRIM BEFORE US--AND WE'D BEST BE ON WITH IT!

EXCUSE ME, MISTER. I'M FRED CRAMER, FOR ON-THE-SPOT NEWS! WONDER IF YOU COULD SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT...
BEGONE, MORTAL! WE'VE NOT THE TIME TO BANTER WITH THEE NOW!
HEY--C'MON, FELLA! PEOPLE WATCHED YOUR HEROIC RESCUE UP THERE, AND THEY'VE GOT A RIGHT TO...
WHAT OCCURRED 'PON YONDER LEDGE IS NONE OF THY CONCERN, LITTLE MAN.
THOSE WHO BLINDLY THRUST THEIR NOSES INTO THE AFFAIRS OF OTHERS ARE APT TO LOSE THEIR SENSE OF SMELL.
R-R-RIGHT. AH... TH-THIS IS CRED FRAMER, S-SIGNING OFF.
HEY, I SAW WHAT YA DID UP ON THAT LEDGE, MACK.
FER A GUY WITH A LISP, YER ALL RIGHT.
THY COMPLIMENTS ARE WELCOME, DRIVER--BUT WE'VE GREATER NEED OF YOUR SKILL BEHIND THE WHEEL!
WHERE TO NOW?
TO THE DIAMOND JEWELRY EXCHANGE--AND SWIFTLY!
THE DIAMOND...? HEY, THAT JOINT IS CLOSED THIS TIME'A NIGHT!
WHADDAYA GUYS WANNA GO THERE FOR?
AND AFTER THE DISTRAUGHT MARY MILLER HAS TOLD HER WOEFUL TALE ONCE MORE...
WELL, THIS IS THE PLACE! HOPE WE'RE IN TIME...
DIAMOND JEWELRY EXCHANG
...SEEIN' AS HOW I BROKE EVERY TRAFFIC LAW IN THE BOOK GETTIN' HERE!
WE SHALL KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT SOON ENOUGH, GOOD DRIVER.
MILADY, STAYEST THOU HERE UNTIL OUR RETURN.
IF THINE ARNOLD IS WITHIN YON DARKENED DWELLING, WE WILL FIND HIM.
I--I DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU FOR THIS.
7 5 0
THEN THOU NEEDEST NOT BOTHER.
LISSEN, LEMME COME ALONG WIT' YOU GUYS.
I'VE CRACKED A SKULL OR TWO MYSELF IN MY DAY.
THOU ART A MOST VALIANT MAN INDEED, MYRON J. MAXWELL--
--BUT THY PLACE IS HERE, IN THE DEFENSE OF THE FAIR LADY!
WALK SOFTLY, BROTHERS. WE KNOW NOT WHAT MAY AWAIT US IN THE SHADOWS.
THEN THOU HADST BEST GO FIRST, FANDRAL. VALIANT VOLSTAGG SHALL PROTECT OUR REAR.


VERILY, VAST ONE-- THY CAUTION IS AS GREAT AS THY GIRTH!
A WISE MAN DOTH TREAD CAREFULLY 'PON UNFAMILIAR GROUND, GRIM HOGUN, LEST...
HEY, YOU!
EH?
WHOA! EASY WITH THEM TOOTH-PICKERS, FELLAS.
I WAS JUST WONDERIN' IF MAYBE YOU GUYS COULD SPARE A QUARTER SO'S I CAN COMPLETE MY COLLEGE EJIKASHUN?
PFAH! STAND ASIDE, THOU DRUNKARD! WE'VE NO TIME TO QUIBBLE WITH THEE NOW!
LIVES HANG IN THE BALANCE HERE!
LIVES, HUH? ANYTHIN' I CAN DO TA HELP, JUMBO?
THOU CANST KEEP THY SODDEN LIPS SEALED, RAGGED ONE- AND LET MY COMRADES GET ABOUT THEIR WORK!
'TWILL NOT BE EASY TO ENTER WITHOUT ALERTING THOSE WITHIN TO OUR PRESENCE.
WOULDST THAT THIS DOOR WERE NOT SO THICK OR...
OH. YA WANNA GET IN, HUH?
SILENCE, DOLT!
LISTEN, JUMBO-- I'M ONLY TRYIN' TA HELP! YA WANT IN-- I CAN GET YA IN!
THEN DO SO, OFFENSIVE ONE- OR HOLD THY PEACE!
'COURSE, THIS TAKES AN EXPERT, Y'UNNERSTAND.
THEY'RE TRICKY THINGS, THESE DOORS. YA GOTTA KNOW HOW TA HANDLE 'EM, TA TALK TO 'EM--
--AN' THE WAY YOU GUYS TALK, YA DIDN'T HAVE A PRAYER!
BY ODIN! THE INEBRIATED ONE ACTUALLY SUCCEEDED IN HIS TASK!
CLIK
IT'S SIMPLE IF YA KNOW HOW, BUDDY.
'SIDES... THE DOOR WASN'T LOCKED.

ON GUARD, MY BRETHREN -- BUT PRAY TRY NOT TO HARM THE ONE CALLED ARNOLD!
IF 'TIS SAFETY THIS ARNOLD DOTH SEEK, FRIEND FANDRAL, THEN LET HIM STAY OUT OF OUR WAY!
WAITEST THOU HERE, RAGGED ONE -- AND KEEP THEE SILENT!
RIGHT... HUSH!
HEY, DID YOU HEAR SOMETHIN' AT THE BACK DOOR, FRANK?
LIKE MAYBE COPS OR SOMETHIN'?
THAT'S THE FIFTH TIME YOU'VE ASKED ME THAT, ERNIE. IT'S NOTHING, I TELL YA -- JUST YOUR NERVES.
NOW CUT IT OUT -- BEFORE YA HAVE US ALL JUMPING OUTTA OUR SKINS!
LET'S JUST BUNDLE UP THE ICE AN' GET OUTTA HERE BEFORE...
HEY!?!
THOK!
'TIS TOO LATE, VARLETS! THE SANDS OF TIME HATH RUN OUT FOR THEE!
AND THE HOUR OF RETRI-BUTION IS AT HAND!
HEY, I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU FREAKS THINK YOU ARE --
-- BUT YOU AIN'T CUTTIN' IN ON OUR ACTION!
THOU HAST SPOKEN THE MAGIC WORD, CHURL!
FOR 'TIS ACTION THAT WE SEEK --
--AND METHINKS AT LAST WE'VE FOUND IT!
PUNK, ALL YOU'VE FOUND IS A REAL FAST WAY TO DIE!
A SLUG FROM ONE OF THESE BABIES WILL TEAR YA OPEN LIKE A...
YYEEOOWW!!


THY MACE DOTH STRIKE MOST SWIFTLY, GRIM HOGUN--
--BUT, VERILY, THESE CHURLS HATH NOT KNOWN COMBAT--
--UNTIL THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED THE AWESOME ATTACK OF VALOROUS VOLST--
CHOOM
AAAAGG!
METHINKS 'TIS AN EXPERIENCE THEY'LL NOT SOON FORGET!
NOW SWIFTLY, VAST ONE-- SUMMON THE LADY MARY TO US, THAT OUR QUEST MIGHT FIND ITS END.
FORGIVE US, MARY MILLER-- BUT I FEAR THY TRULY BELOVED BE AMONG THE FALLEN HERE.
IF THOU WILT TELL US WHICH ONE HE IS, WE WILL HIE HIM AWAY ERE THE AUTHORITIES ARRIVE TO APPREHEND THE REST!
WH-WHATEVER YOU SAY, MISTER FANDRAL.
WELL, MILADY-- WE'VE UNMASKED THEM ALL FOR THEE. PRAY POINT OUT THY BELOVED.
WHAT--?!?
I--I DON'T KNOW HOW TO TELL YOU THIS, FANDRAL--
--BUT ARNOLD ISN'T HERE!
ARNOLD? YA MEAN THAT SKINNY KID WITH THE GLASSES? GEE, I COULD'A TOLD YA THAT!
HE TOOK OFF BEFORE THE GOIN' GOT ROUGH AROUND HERE!


THE OTHER GUYS LEFT 'IM OUT FRONT TO KEEP WATCH-- BUT SOON'S THEY WENT INSIDE, HE HAILED A CAB AN' TOOK OFF!
I HEARD 'IM TELL THE CABBIE TA TAKE 'IM DOWN TA THE WATERFRONT!
THEN 'TIS THERE THAT WE MUST VENTURE AS WELL!
EVERYTHIN' OKAY, GUYS? YA FIND THAT FELLA YOU WAS LOOKIN' FOR?
NOT YET, GOOD DRIVER-- BUT WITH THINE AID, WE STILL HAVE HOPE.
TO THE WATERFRONT, MYRON J. MAXWELL--AS SWIFTLY AS THY GOLDEN CHARIOT CAN CARRY US!
SOMEHOW, I WAS AFRAID YOU WAS GONNA SAY THAT.
HEY, WHO'S THE CHARITY CASE HERE? A FRIEND OF YERS?
THE NAME'S RAGLAND T. PEPPERMILL-- AT YER SERVICE, CHUM. MY PALS CALL ME RAGS.
PLEASED TA MEET YA, I GUESS--
--JUST SO LONG AS YA BREATHE DOWNWIND 'A ME.
OPENING THE WINDOW, MYRON J. MAXWELL PUTS THE HAMMER DOWN, AND GROANING UNDER THE WEIGHT OF ITS PASSENGERS, THE TAXI TEARS AWAY FROM THE RAVAGED JEWELRY STORE--
--JUST AS THE POLICE COME SCREAMING UPON THE SCENE!
DOWN THE PATCHED AND RUTTED STREETS OF MANHATTAN, THE VEHICLE RATTLES-- UNTIL RAGLAND T. PEPPERMILL'S OLFACTORY-OFFENDING ODOR BECOMES LOST AMIDST SIMILAR SCENTS--
--AND THE THREE ASGARDIANS KNOW THEY HAVE REACHED-- THE WATER-FRONT!
THIS SEEMS AS GOOD A PLACE TO BEGIN OUR SEARCH AS ANY.
PRITHEE, REMAIN WITH MARY MILLER ONCE MORE GOOD DRIVER. WE SHALL RETURN WHEN WE HAVE FOUND HIM THAT WE DO SEEK.
230
TRY TA MAKE IT SNAPPY, HUH? THIS AIN'T EXACTLY THE KINDA NEIGHBORHOOD I'D LIKE TA BE CAUGHT DEAD IN.
IF YA KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

TRULY, THIS DOTH SEEM TO BE THY DOMAIN, RAGGED ONE.
WHERE DOST THOU SUGGEST WE BEGIN?
MCGINTY'S IS A PRETTY CLASSY PLACE. THEY EVEN WASH THE GLASSES ONCE A WEEK.
JEEZ, WILL YA LOOK AT THAT?!?
HEY, I DIDN'T KNOW THE CIRCUS WUZ IN TOWN!
SINCE THOU ART THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS THE MISSING ARNOLD BY SIGHT, FRIEND RAGS-- PRAY KEEP THY BLOODSHOT EYES OPEN.
YA MEAN BOTH AT THE SAME TIME?
YEAH? SOMETHIN' I CAN DO FER YOU WEIRDOS?
AYE, BARKEEP-- A FLAGON OF THY FINEST MEAD, IF THOU WOULDST.
MY COMRADES AND I ARE ON A GREAT AND NOBLE QUEST--AND WE SEEK REFRESH-MENT.
WHOOPEE.
WOULD IT NOT HAVE BEEN SIMPLER MERELY TO INQUIRE AFTER THE ONE WE SEEK, FRIEND FANDRAL?
NAY, ENORMOUS ONE. IN PRIMITIVE ENVIRONS SUCH AS THIS, 'TIS BEST TO FIRST GAIN THE CONFI-DENCE OF THE LOCALS.
I'LL DRINK TA THAT.
NOW WHY DOST THOU NOT MINGLE WITH THE OTHER PATRONS, VOLSTAGG-- AND SEE WHAT THOU CANST LEARN.
...SO I SAYS TO HIM, I SAYS-- IF YA WANNA KNOW ANYTHIN', ASK ME--
--'CUZ IF BIG BULL BULOWSKY DON'T KNOW IT, IT AIN'T WORTH KNOWIN'!
THEN PRITHEE, GOOD SIR, BUT MAYHAP THOU CANST ANSWER A QUESTION.
YOU TALKIN' TA ME, BUTTER-BALL?
INDEED, GOOD SIR, FOR I WONDER IF THOU HAST POSSIBLY SEEN...
UH-UH, TUBBO-- I AIN'T SEEN NOTHIN' AN' I DON'T KNOW NOTHIN'!
BUT MOMENTS AGO, THOU DIDST SAY THAT...
LISTEN, FATSTUFF, ARE YOU GONNA BUZZ OFF--
--OR AM I GONNA HAFTA STUFF YER BEARD UP YER NOSE?

HEY, YA BETTER WATCH THE WAY YA TALK TA MY BUDDY, BUSTER-- OR HE'S LIABLE TA REARRANGE YER TEETH!
OH YEAH?
POW!
BY THE ALL-FATHER'S BEARD, RAGGED ONE-- HAST THOU ANY IDEA WHAT THOU HAST DONE?
IN AN ESTABLISHMENT SUCH AS THIS, ONE ILL-CONSIDERED PUNCH IS ALL IT TAKES TO START WORLD WAR THREE--
--AND THAT, AS YOU MAY ALREADY HAVE NOTICED, IS ABOUT WHERE WE CAME IN!
AN' WHAT'RE YOU GRINNIN' ABOUT, FANCY-PANTS?
WIPE OFF THAT SMIRK--'FORE I SMASH IN YER CRUMMY FACE!
CHURL! HAST THOU NO MANNERS?
WHUDDO!
NEVER INTERRUPT A MAN WHILST HE IS DRINKING!

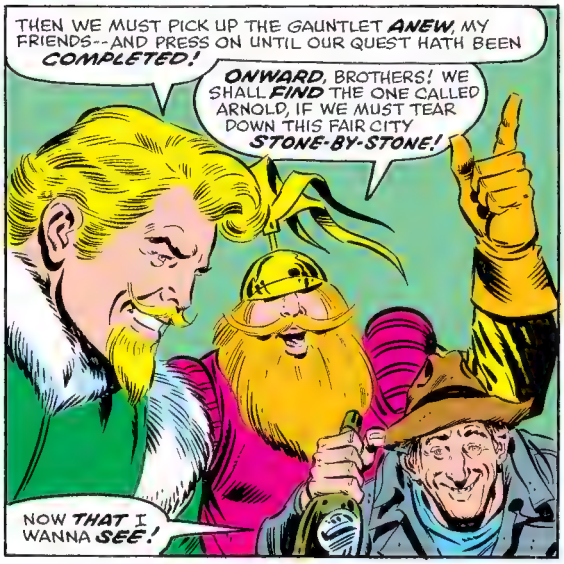
YA SHOULDN'T OUGHT'A OF DONE THAT, FELLA!
OL' CHARLIE USED TA BE OUR CELL-MATE!
THEN IF THOU ART SO NEAR TO THE FALLEN CHARLIE, KNAVES--
--METHINKS MAYHAP THOU SHOULDST JOIN HIM IN REPOSE!
THAK!
WHAK!
PAK!
VERILY, THE BATTLE HATH BECOME TOO CLOSE FOR VALOROUS VOLSTAGG!
IN TRUTH, I AM AT MY BEST ON OPEN GROUND!
NO WAY, CHUBBY! YOU AIN'T GOIN' NO PLACE--!
AT LEAST, NOT STANDIN' UP!
PFAH! I SAY THEE-- BEGONE, FLEAS!
BEGONE-- LEST THE EAGLE OF WARRIORS DOTH OVERWHELM THEE WITH HIS BOUNDLESS WRATH!
WHOOM!
AND THE VAST ONE'S WRATH IS AS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE FURY OF HOGUN THE GRIM!
MAN, THIS SURE BEATS SPENDIN' THE NIGHT RUMMAGIN' THRU OL' GARBAGE CANS!
I'LL TELL YA, THERE AIN'T NOTHIN' LIKE...
UH-OH.

CLUNK!
NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY FELLA. YA SHOULDN'T HIT PEOPLE OVER THE HEAD WIT' BOTTLES!
YA COULD HURT SOMEBODY LIKE THAT!

AN' IT'S A TERRIBLE WASTE OF PERFECTLY GOOD ROTGUT BESIDES! NOW, WHERE WAS I...?
OH, YEAH. THIS SURE BEATS RUMMAGIN' THRU GARBAGE CANS!

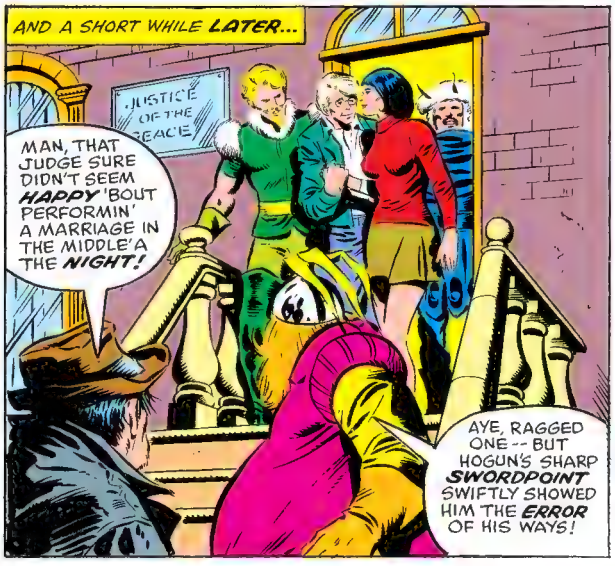
SOOTH, WHAT A SORRY DIS-APPOINT-MENT THESE VARLETS ARE!
THEY'VE NO REAL STOMACH FOR COMBAT WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO IT!

METHINKS THY SILVER-TONGUED BANTER IS WASTED, DASHING ONE. IT APPEARS ALL OUR ADVERSARIES ARE FALLEN--
--AND YET WE HAVE FOUND NO TRACE OF THE ONE WE SEEK!


THEN WE MUST PICK UP THE GAUNTLET ANEW, MY FRIENDS--AND PRESS ON UNTIL OUR QUEST HATH BEEN COMPLETED!
ONWARD, BROTHERS! WE SHALL FIND THE ONE CALLED ARNOLD, IF WE MUST TEAR DOWN THIS FAIR CITY STONE-BY-STONE!
NOW THAT I WANNA SEE!

PRITHEE, INEBRIATED ONE--HOW MANY OTHER TAVERNS ARE THERE IN THIS VICINITY?
BAR
OH...ABOUT EIGHTEEN, I THINK... GIVE OR TAKE A COUPLE.
NAY! MUST WE REPEAT THIS MADNESS EIGHTEEN TIMES AGAIN ERE WE FINALLY LOCATE FAIR MARY'S BETROTHED?

METHINKS NOT, ENORMOUS ONE.
FOR, LEST MINE EYES DECEIVE ME, IT APPEARS THE LADY HATH SOLVED OUR DILEMMA FOR US!
OH, FANDRAL--I'M SO GLAD YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS ARE BACK!
I WANT YOU TO MEET ARNOLD SLACKMYSTER... MY FIANCE!
HI. MARY'S TOLD ME ALL ABOUT YOU.
BUT HOW--?
OH, THAT! WHILE I WAS WAITING IN THE CAB, I SAW POOR ARNOLD--WALKING ALONG THE PIER!
I--I WAS TRYING TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO DROWN MYSELF.
Y'SEE, AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TONIGHT, I WAS SURE I'D LOST MARY FOREVER--AND I DIDN'T WANT TO GO ON LIVING WITHOUT HER!
BUT NOW, THANKS TO ALL OF YOU, WE'RE TOGETHER AGAIN--AND LIFE IS ABSOLUTELY FANTASTIC!
AND THY PLANS FOR THE FUTURE, MILADY?
I GUESS FIRST WE'LL GO TO THE POLICE. MAYBE ARNOLD CAN TURN STATE'S EVIDENCE OR SOMETHING.
AND WHEN THAT'S ALL OVER, WE'RE GOING TO BE MARRIED.
AFTER ALL THOU HAST GONE THRU TO FIND ONE ANOTHER AGAIN, THOU WOULDST STILL POSTPONE THE JOYOUS EVENT?
VERILY, FANDRAL DOTH SAY THEE... NAY!
THE AUTHORITIES CAN WAIT, BUT FRIEND CUPID CANNOT!
BUT WE...
NOT ANOTHER WORD, MILADY. TO THE NEAREST MAGISTRATE, MYRON J. MAXWELL--AND SWIFTLY!
I WOULD SEE THESE TWO WEDDED ERE THIS EVENING ENDS!
THEN WHAT'RE YA WAITIN' FOR? PILE IN, GANG--AN' LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD!


AND A SHORT WHILE LATER...
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE
MAN, THAT JUDGE SURE DIDN'T SEEM HAPPY 'BOUT PERFORMIN' A MARRIAGE IN THE MIDDLE'A THE NIGHT!
AYE, RAGGED ONE--BUT HOGUN'S SHARP SWORDPOINT SWIFTLY SHOWED HIM THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS!

THOU HAST OUR THANKS FOR WAITING, GOOD DRIVER.
WIT' SEVENTEEN-AN'A-HALF BUCKS ALREADY ON THE METER, WHAT ELSE WAS I GONNA DO?
SO WHERE TO NOW, MACK?
TO WHEREVER THY PASSENGERS MOST DESIRE, MY FRIEND.

IT DOTH APPEAR WE ARE BACK WHERE WE STARTED THIS MAD EVENING, DASHING ONE.
INDEED, GRIM HOGUN--BUT 'TIS A CONDITION EASILY CURED!

NEXT ISSUE:

HE'S BACK--IN SENSES-SHATTERING SOLO ACTION WE GUARANTEE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE! BE HERE FOR THE ALL-NEW ADVENTURES OF...

NICK FURY, AGENT OF SHIELD!

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THE MIGHTY
THOR
YOU DARED TO INVADE THE TOWER OF SOLITUDE, ASGARDIAN!
NOW YOU MUST FACE THE STORM GIANT'S RAGE!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

JV338

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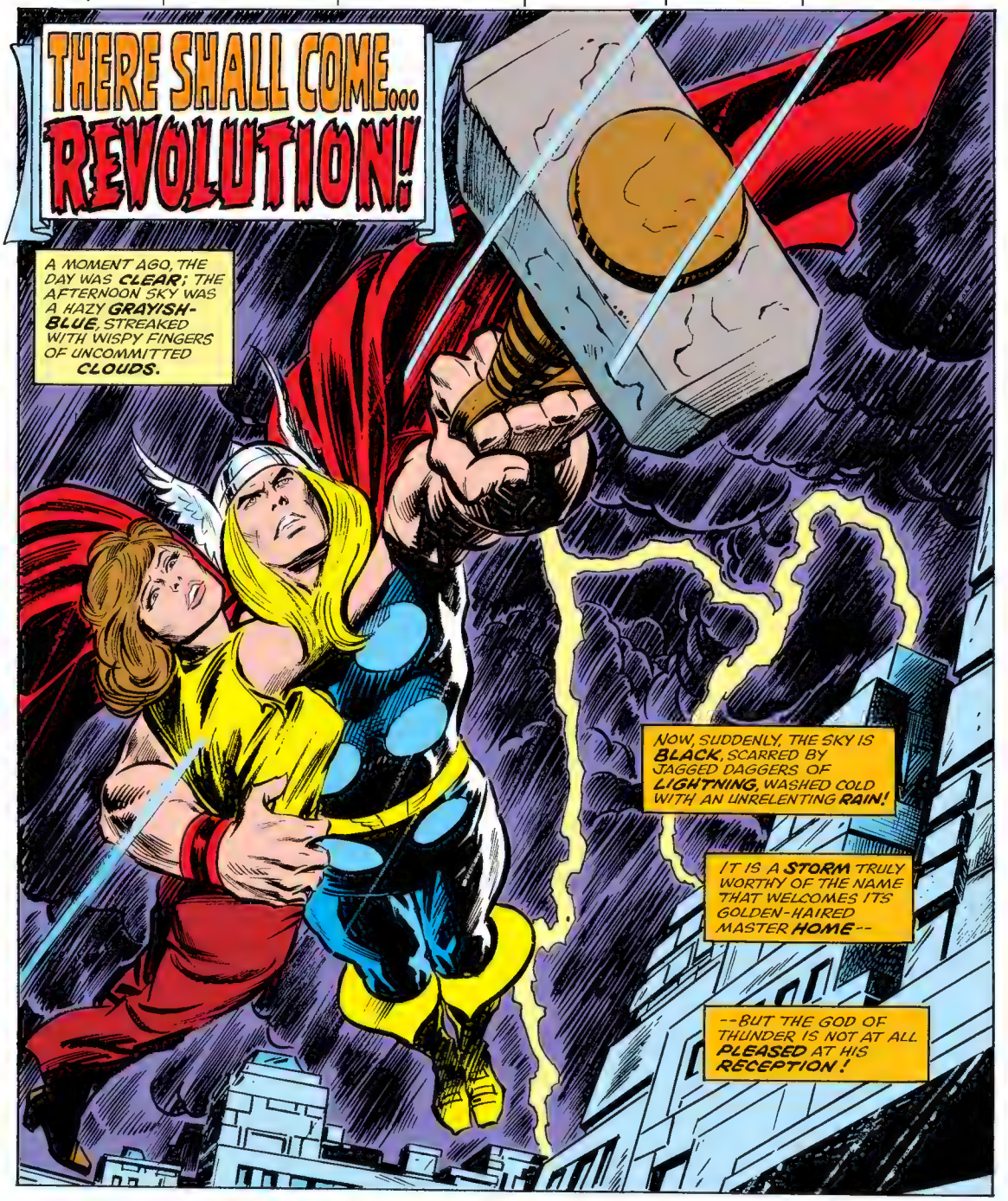
THERE SHALL COME... REVOLUTION!


A MOMENT AGO, THE DAY WAS CLEAR; THE AFTERNOON SKY WAS A HAZY GRAYISH-BLUE, STREAKED WITH WISPY FINGERS OF UNCOMMITTED CLOUDS.
NOW, SUDDENLY, THE SKY IS BLACK, SCARRED BY JAGGED DAGGERS OF LIGHTNING, WASHED COLD WITH AN UNRELENTING RAIN!
IT IS A STORM TRULY WORTHY OF THE NAME THAT WELCOMES ITS GOLDEN-HAIRED MASTER HOME--
--BUT THE GOD OF THUNDER IS NOT AT ALL PLEASED AT HIS RECEPTION!

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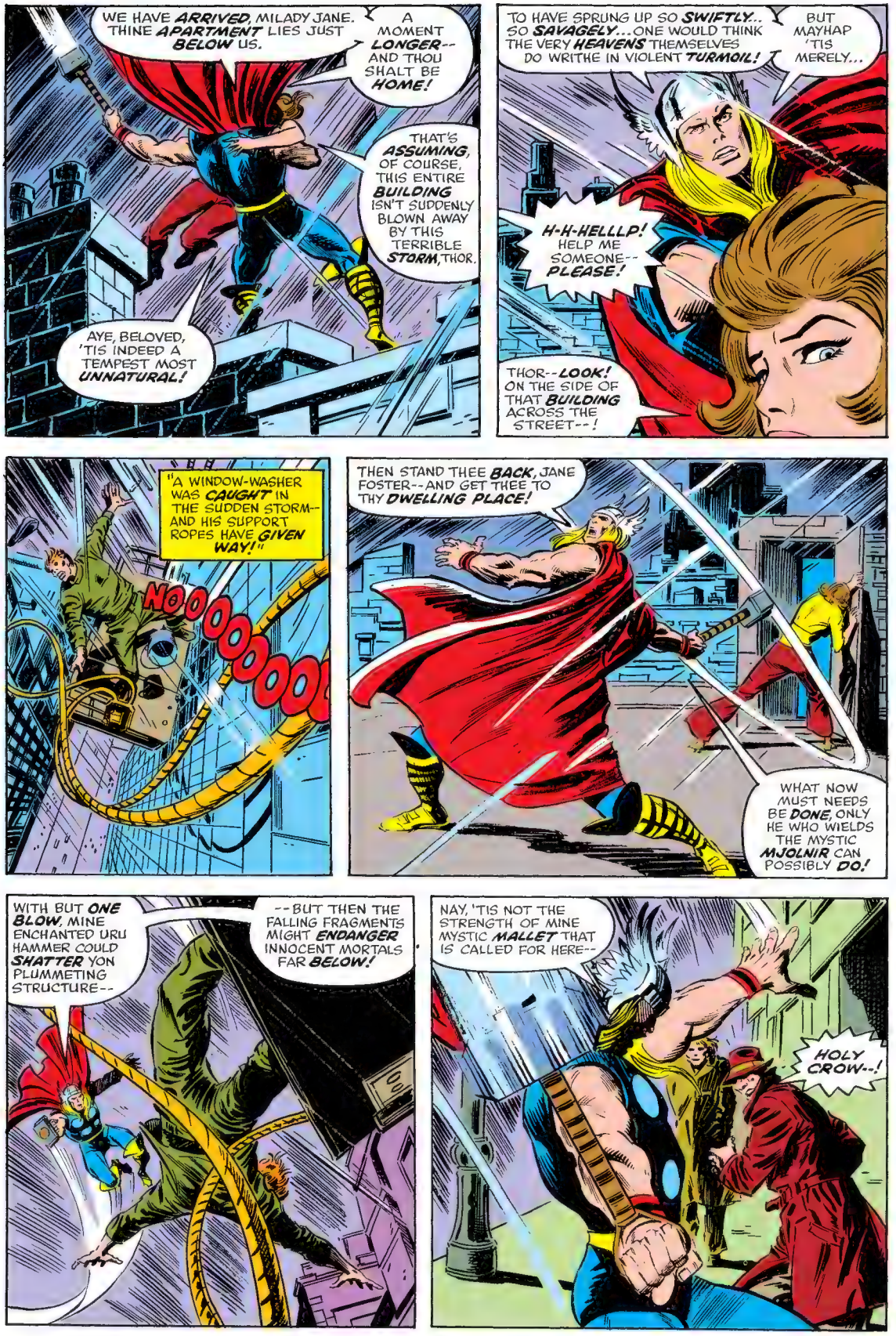
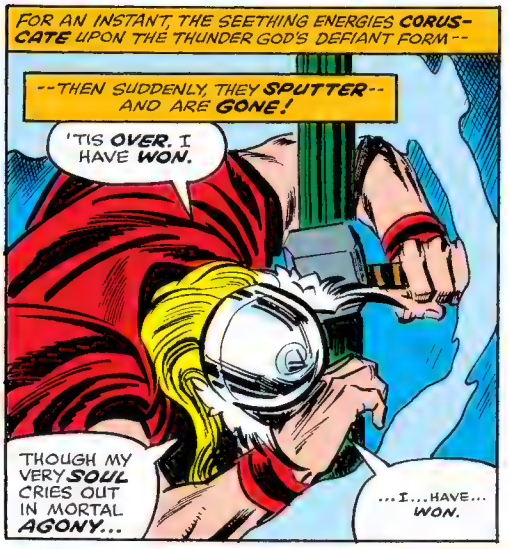

WE HAVE ARRIVED, MILADY JANE. THINE APARTMENT LIES JUST BELOW US.
A MOMENT LONGER-- AND THOU SHALT BE HOME!
THAT'S ASSUMING, OF COURSE, THIS ENTIRE BUILDING ISN'T SUDDENLY BLOWN AWAY BY THIS TERRIBLE STORM, THOR.
AYE, BELOVED, 'TIS INDEED A TEMPEST MOST UNNATURAL!
TO HAVE SPRUNG UP SO SWIFTLY... SO SAVAGELY... ONE WOULD THINK THE VERY HEAVENS THEMSELVES DO WRITHE IN VIOLENT TURMOIL!
BUT MAYHAP 'TIS MERELY...
H-H-HELLLP! HELP ME SOMEONE-- PLEASE!
THOR--LOOK! ON THE SIDE OF THAT BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET--!
"A WINDOW-WASHER WAS CAUGHT IN THE SUDDEN STORM-- AND HIS SUPPORT ROPES HAVE GIVEN WAY!"
NOOOOOOOO
THEN STAND THEE BACK, JANE FOSTER--AND GET THEE TO THY DWELLING PLACE!
WHAT NOW MUST NEEDS BE DONE, ONLY HE WHO WIELDS THE MYSTIC MJOLNIR CAN POSSIBLY DO!
WITH BUT ONE BLOW, MINE ENCHANTED URU HAMMER COULD SHATTER YON PLUMMETING STRUCTURE--
--BUT THEN THE FALLING FRAGMENTS MIGHT ENDANGER INNOCENT MORTALS FAR BELOW!
NAY, 'TIS NOT THE STRENGTH OF MINE MYSTIC MALLET THAT IS CALLED FOR HERE--
HOLY CROW--!

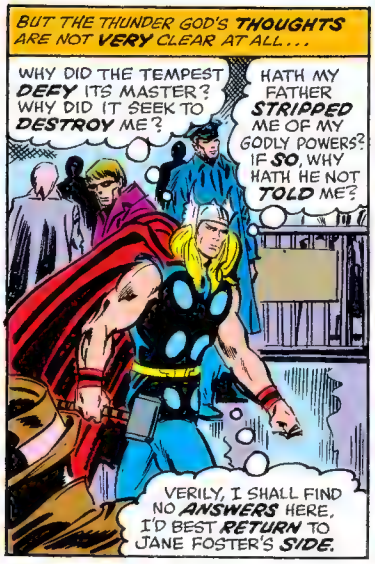
--BUT RATHER THE POWER OF MINE OWN MIGHTY SINEWS--
--THE STRENGTH THAT IS THE BIRTHRIGHT OF THOR!
TH-THANKS, MISTER. I OWE YA MY...
HEY, AIN'T YOU THOR? THE ONE THEY CALL THE THUNDER GOD?
IF YER S'POSED TA BE THE BOSS OF THIS FREAKY STORM, WHY DON'CHA DO SOMETHIN' TA STOP IT--'FORE SOMEBODY REALLY GETS HURT!
THY WORDS ARE RICH WITH WISDOM, MORTAL.
THUS LET THE RAGING TEMPEST HEED ITS MASTER'S COMMAND!
LET THE THUNDER GROW SILENT! LET THE RAINS GROW STILL! LET THE LIGHTNING...
AARRGGHH!!
ZZKKAAKK!!
BY THE BEARD OF MY FATHER! NE'ER BEFORE HAVE THE CHURNING ELEMENTS DEFIED THE WORD OF THOR!
'TIS AS IF THE VERY HEAVENS DO REBEL AGAINST MY WILL!
BUT EVER HATH THE MIGHTY THOR RULED THE STORM AND THE LIGHTNING--
--AND THUS SHALL IT EVER REMAIN!
COME, THOU MOST FICKLE FORCES--IF THOU DOST DARE!
COME YE--AND TASTE OF THE THUNDER GOD'S MOST RIGHTEOUS WRATH!

THOUGH THOU DOST POSSESS THE POWER TO TEAR THIS VERY PLANET ASUNDER, STILL SHALL THE PRINCE OF ASGARD NEVER FALTER!
STILL SHALL THE SON OF ODIN NEVER WITHDRAW!

THOUGH THOU DOST SEEK TO SEAR THE VERY FLESH FROM OFF MY BONES, STILL IS THOR THY MASTER--
--AND STILL SHALL I PREVAIL!!

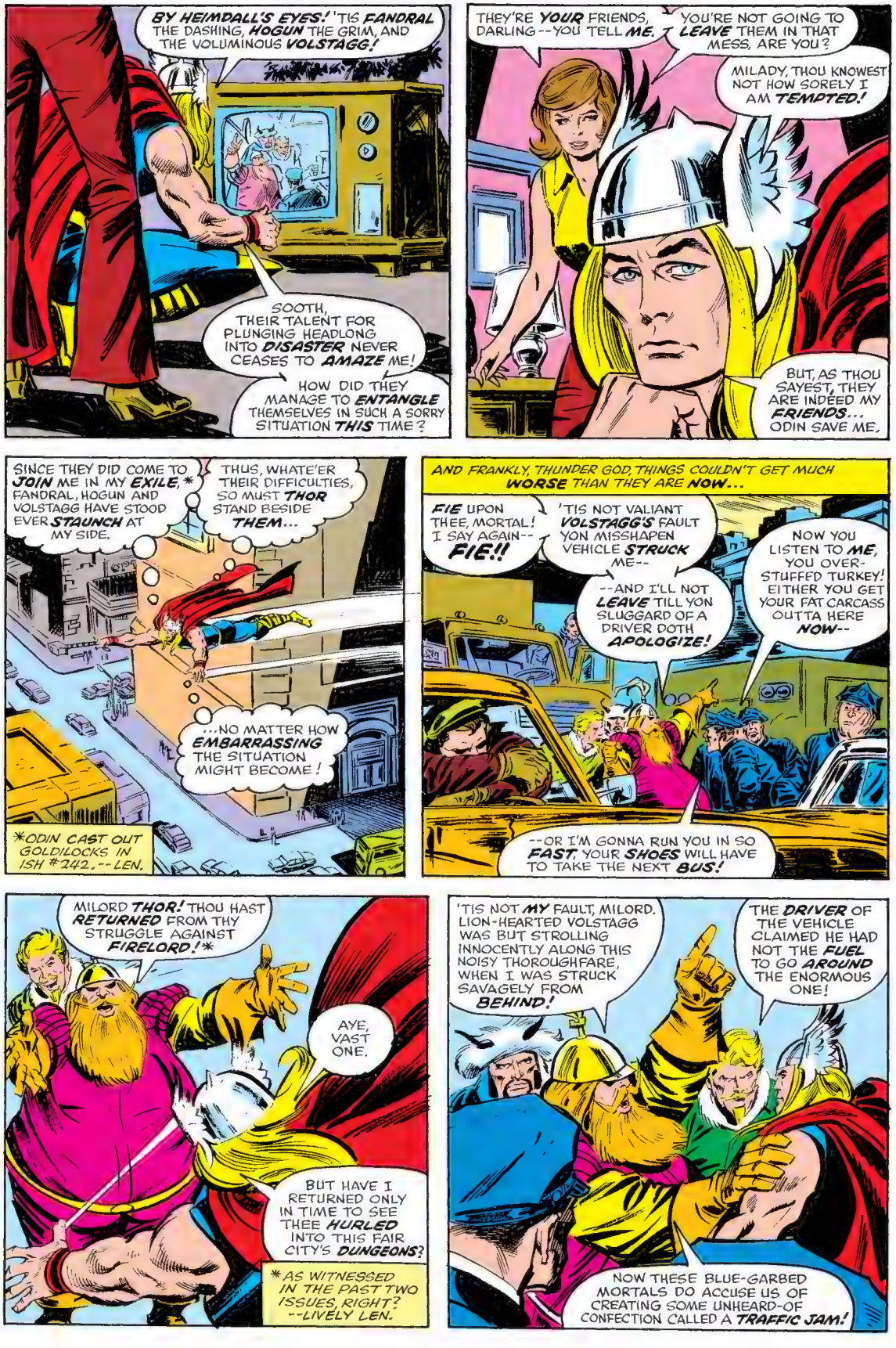

FOR AN INSTANT, THE SEETHING ENERGIES CORUSCATE UPON THE THUNDER GOD'S DEFIANT FORM--
--THEN SUDDENLY, THEY SPUTTER-- AND ARE GONE!
'TIS OVER. I HAVE WON.
THOUGH MY VERY SOUL CRIES OUT IN MORTAL AGONY...
...I...HAVE... WON.

AS SWIFTLY AS THEY HAD COME, THE STORM CLOUDS DISPERSE--AND THE MANHATTAN SKY IS CLEAR ONCE MORE.
WELL, AT LEAST AS CLEAR AS IT EVER IS.

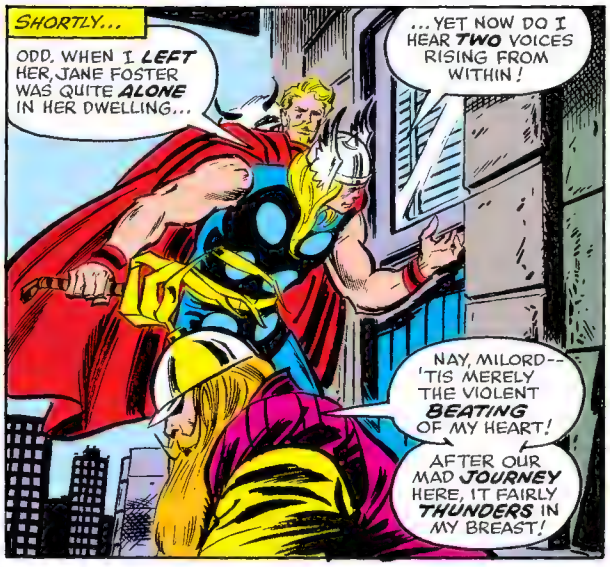

BUT THE THUNDER GOD'S THOUGHTS ARE NOT VERY CLEAR AT ALL...
WHY DID THE TEMPEST DEFY ITS MASTER? WHY DID IT SEEK TO DESTROY ME?
HATH MY FATHER STRIPPED ME OF MY GODLY POWERS? IF SO, WHY HATH HE NOT TOLD ME?
VERILY, I SHALL FIND NO ANSWERS HERE, I'D BEST RETURN TO JANE FOSTER'S SIDE.

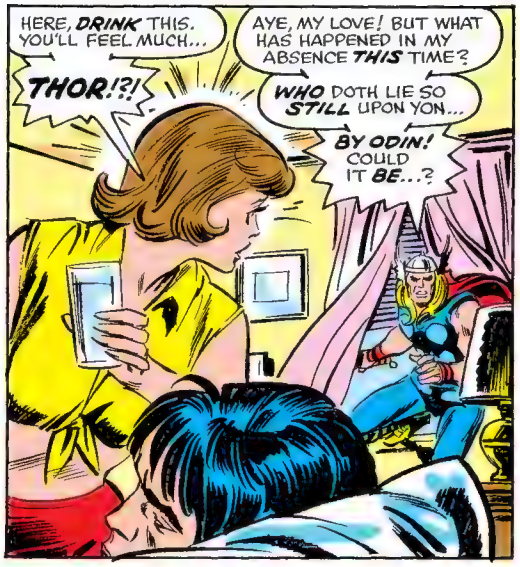
PRESENTLY...
DARLING, THANK HEAVEN YOU'RE BACK. SOMETHING ELSE HAS HAPPENED IN YOUR ABSENCE.
A NEW PROBLEM, MILADY? WHAT COULD IT POSSIBLY BE NOW?

TAKE A PEEK AT THE TELEVISION--AND SEE FOR YOURSELF!
THERE'S A MASSIVE TRAFFIC TIE-UP OVER IN CENTRAL PARK--
--AND YOU WON'T BELIEVE THE CAUSE OF IT!


BY HEIMDALL'S EYES! 'TIS FANDRAL THE DASHING, HOGUN THE GRIM, AND THE VOLUMINOUS VOLSTAGG!
SOOTH, THEIR TALENT FOR PLUNGING HEADLONG INTO DISASTER NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE ME!
HOW DID THEY MANAGE TO ENTANGLE THEMSELVES IN SUCH A SORRY SITUATION THIS TIME?
THEY'RE YOUR FRIENDS, DARLING--YOU TELL ME.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LEAVE THEM IN THAT MESS, ARE YOU?
MILADY, THOU KNOWEST NOT HOW SORELY I AM TEMPTED!
BUT, AS THOU SAYEST, THEY ARE INDEED MY FRIENDS... ODIN SAVE ME.
SINCE THEY DID COME TO JOIN ME IN MY EXILE,* FANDRAL, HOGUN AND VOLSTAGG HAVE STOOD EVER STAUNCH AT MY SIDE.
THUS, WHATE'ER THEIR DIFFICULTIES, SO MUST THOR STAND BESIDE THEM...
...NO MATTER HOW EMBARRASSING THE SITUATION MIGHT BECOME!
*ODIN CAST OUT GOLDILOCKS IN ISH #242.--LEN.
AND FRANKLY, THUNDER GOD, THINGS COULDN'T GET MUCH WORSE THAN THEY ARE NOW...
FIE UPON THEE, MORTAL! I SAY AGAIN-- FIE!!
'TIS NOT VALIANT VOLSTAGG'S FAULT YON MISSHAPEN VEHICLE STRUCK ME--
--AND I'LL NOT LEAVE TILL YON SLUGGARD OF A DRIVER DOTH APOLOGIZE!
NOW YOU LISTEN TO ME, YOU OVER-STUFFED TURKEY! EITHER YOU GET YOUR FAT CARCASS OUTTA HERE NOW--
--OR I'M GONNA RUN YOU IN SO FAST, YOUR SHOES WILL HAVE TO TAKE THE NEXT BUS!
MILORD THOR! THOU HAST RETURNED FROM THY STRUGGLE AGAINST FIRELORD!*
AYE, VAST ONE.
BUT HAVE I RETURNED ONLY IN TIME TO SEE THEE HURLED INTO THIS FAIR CITY'S DUNGEONS?
*AS WITNESSED IN THE PAST TWO ISSUES, RIGHT? --LIVELY LEN.
'TIS NOT MY FAULT, MILORD. LION-HEARTED VOLSTAGG WAS BUT STROLLING INNOCENTLY ALONG THIS NOISY THOROUGHFARE, WHEN I WAS STRUCK SAVAGELY FROM BEHIND!
THE DRIVER OF THE VEHICLE CLAIMED HE HAD NOT THE FUEL TO GO AROUND THE ENORMOUS ONE!
NOW THESE BLUE-GARBED MORTALS DO ACCUSE US OF CREATING SOME UNHEARD-OF CONFECTION CALLED A TRAFFIC JAM!

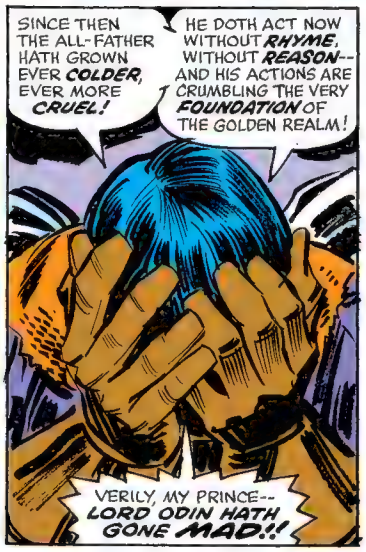
SURELY, IF ENSNARLING THE TRAFFIC IS ALL THOU DOST STAND BLAMED OF, 'TWOULD BE FAR SIMPLER INDEED TO CEASE POINTING THINE ACCUSING FINGER--
--AND INSTEAD TAKE STEPS TO CORRECT THE SITUATION!
ABELINE
HOLY BLUE HANNAH! THAT GUY'S GOT MUSCLES HE AIN'T EVEN USED YET!
HEY! PUT ME DOWN, YA LONG-HAIRED WEIRDO!
YER GONNA FOUL UP MY METER AN' EVERYTHIN'!
AS THOU DOST WISH, MORTAL...
...AFTER I HAVE POINTED THY VEHICLE IN THE PROPER DIRECTION!
SEVERAL MINUTES (AND SEVERAL DOZEN INCREDIBLE AUTO MANEUVERS) LATER, PASSING PEDESTRIANS ARE STARTLED BY A SPECTACLE THEY HAVE NEVER BEFORE SEEN...
...AND, FRANKLY, NEVER REALLY EXPECTED TO SEE!
WELL, IF THAT DON'T BEAT ALL!
I--I DON'T BELIEVE IT! I BEEN ON THIS BEAT FOR FIFTEEN YEARS--
--AND THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN TRAFFIC REALLY MOVIN' DURING THE RUSH HOUR!
TALK ABOUT MOVING! GRAB A LOOK AT GOLDILOCKS AND HIS CHUMS!
COME, MY BROTHERS-AT-ARMS! MILADY JANE DOTH AWAIT US--
--AND YE HAVE CREATED PANDEMONIUM ENOW FOR ONE DAY!
BUT COULD WE NOT WALK TO THY LADY'S ABODE, FRIEND THOR?
THOUGH WELL-FAMED VOLSTAGG DOTH TRULY POSSESS THE HEART OF AN EAGLE, SADLY I LACK ITS WINGS!

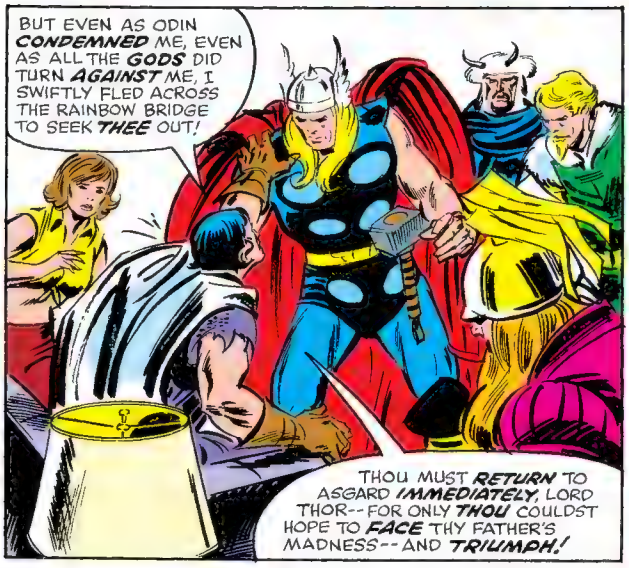

SHORTLY...
ODD, WHEN I LEFT HER, JANE FOSTER WAS QUITE ALONE IN HER DWELLING...
...YET NOW DO I HEAR TWO VOICES RISING FROM WITHIN!
NAY, MILORD--'TIS MERELY THE VIOLENT BEATING OF MY HEART!
AFTER OUR MAD JOURNEY HERE, IT FAIRLY THUNDERS IN MY BREAST!


HERE, DRINK THIS. YOU'LL FEEL MUCH...
THOR!?!
AYE, MY LOVE! BUT WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN MY ABSENCE THIS TIME?
WHO DOTH LIE SO STILL UPON YON...
BY ODIN! COULD IT BE...?

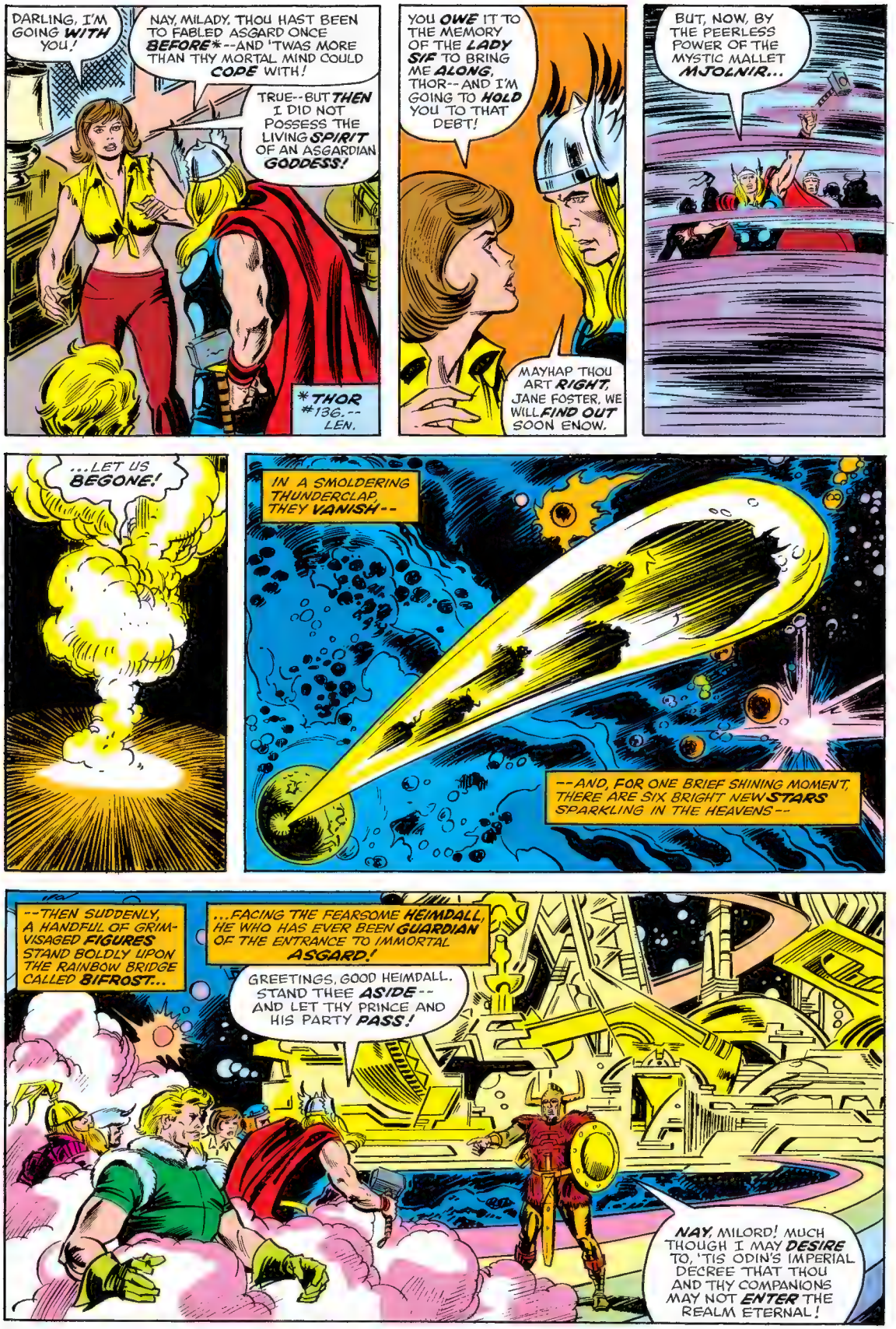
MILORD THOR! IS IT TRULY THEE? HAST THOU RETURNED AT LAST?
AYE, BRAVE BALDER... 'TIS I. BUT WHAT BRINGS THEE HERE TO EARTH?
WHY IS THY VERY GARB IN TATTERS?
'TIS A MOST WOEFUL TALE INDEED, MY PRINCE!

THE REALM ETERNAL IS IN DIRE JEOPARDY, MILORD! IN THE DAYS PAST, THINE OWN OMNIPOTENT FATHER HATH EXILED HIS GRAND VIZIER TO THE TOWER OF SOLITUDE--AND INSTALLED THE EVIL IGRON IN HIS PLACE!


SINCE THEN THE ALL-FATHER HATH GROWN EVER COLDER, EVER MORE CRUEL!
HE DOTH ACT NOW WITHOUT RHYME, WITHOUT REASON--AND HIS ACTIONS ARE CRUMBLING THE VERY FOUNDATION OF THE GOLDEN REALM!
VERILY, MY PRINCE--LORD ODIN HATH GONE MAD!!


BUT EVEN AS ODIN CONDEMNED ME, EVEN AS ALL THE GODS DID TURN AGAINST ME, I SWIFTLY FLED ACROSS THE RAINBOW BRIDGE TO SEEK THEE OUT!
THOU MUST RETURN TO ASGARD IMMEDIATELY, LORD THOR--FOR ONLY THOU COULDST HOPE TO FACE THY FATHER'S MADNESS--AND TRIUMPH!

THEN FLY TO IMMORTAL ASGARD I SHALL, MY FRIEND--AND I SHALL BATTLE ALL THE REALM ETERNAL IF NEEDS I MUST TILL MY FATHER'S INSANITY HATH BEEN CURED!
SO SWEARS THOR!
SO SWEARS THE SON OF ODIN!!


DARLING, I'M GOING WITH YOU!
NAY, MILADY, THOU HAST BEEN TO FABLED ASGARD ONCE BEFORE*--AND 'TWAS MORE THAN THY MORTAL MIND COULD COPE WITH!
TRUE--BUT THEN I DID NOT POSSESS THE LIVING SPIRIT OF AN ASGARDIAN GODDESS!
*THOR #136.--LEN.
YOU OWE IT TO THE MEMORY OF THE LADY SIF TO BRING ME ALONG, THOR--AND I'M GOING TO HOLD YOU TO THAT DEBT!
MAYHAP THOU ART RIGHT, JANE FOSTER, WE WILL FIND OUT SOON ENOW.
BUT, NOW, BY THE PEERLESS POWER OF THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR...
...LET US BEGONE!
IN A SMOLDERING THUNDERCLAP, THEY VANISH--
--AND, FOR ONE BRIEF SHINING MOMENT, THERE ARE SIX BRIGHT NEW STARS SPARKLING IN THE HEAVENS--
--THEN SUDDENLY, A HANDFUL OF GRIM-VISAGED FIGURES STAND BOLDLY UPON THE RAINBOW BRIDGE CALLED BIFROST...
...FACING THE FEARSOME HEIMDALL, HE WHO HAS EVER BEEN GUARDIAN OF THE ENTRANCE TO IMMORTAL ASGARD!
GREETINGS, GOOD HEIMDALL. STAND THEE ASIDE--AND LET THY PRINCE AND HIS PARTY PASS!
NAY, MILORD! MUCH THOUGH I MAY DESIRE TO, 'TIS ODIN'S IMPERIAL DECREE THAT THOU AND THY COMPANIONS MAY NOT ENTER THE REALM ETERNAL!

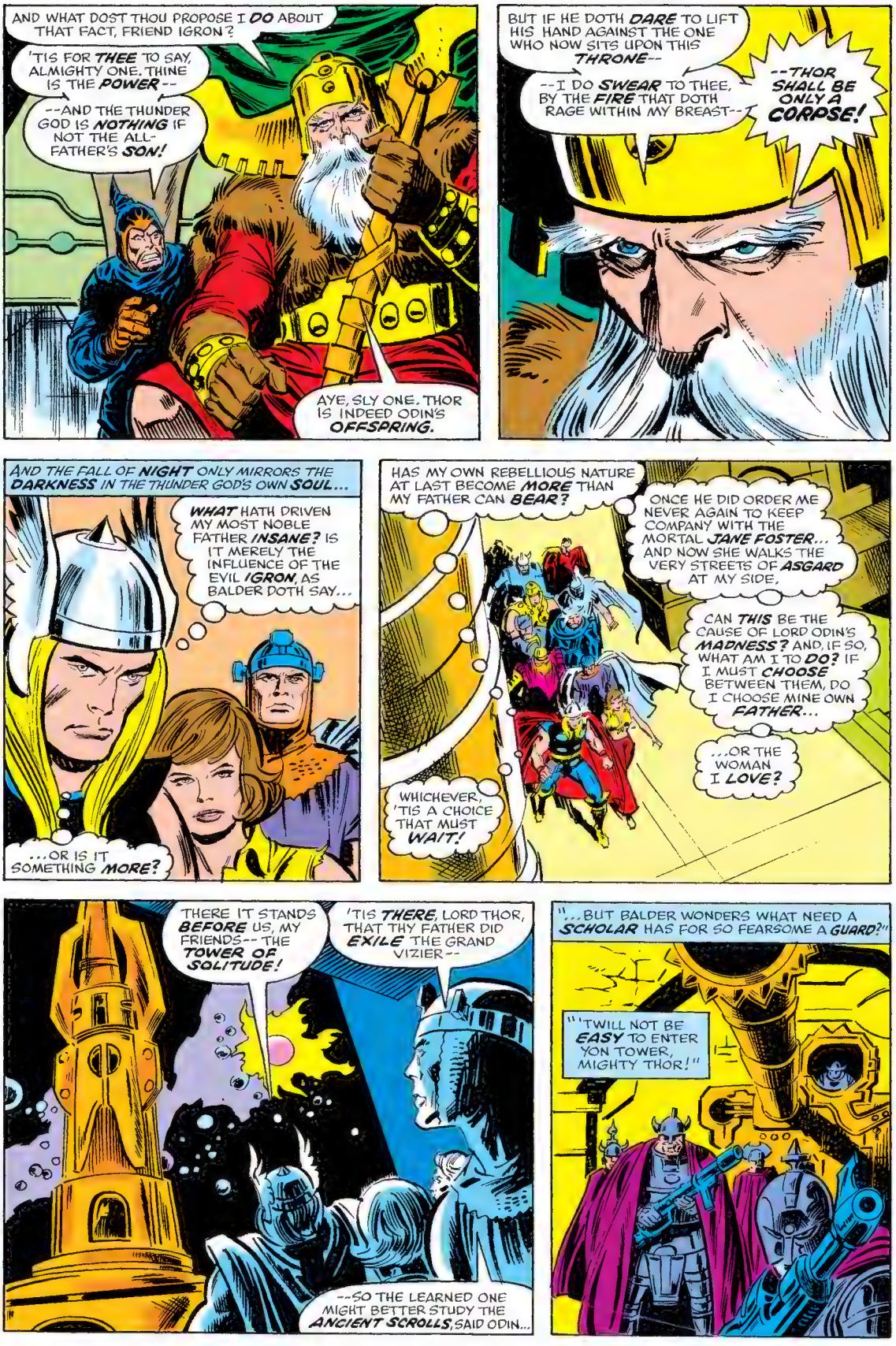
FAITHFUL ONE, OUR LORD BE SORELY TROUBLED! THERE IS GRAVE MADNESS UPON HIS BROW--AND ONLY I MAY EASE IT!
NOW, BY THE ROYAL BLOOD WHICH IS MY BIRTHRIGHT, I SAY THEE--STAND ASIDE!
STAND ASIDE--OR FEEL THE STING OF MY MYSTIC HAMMER!
THOU WOULDST RAISE THY HAND AGAINST THE LOYAL HEIMDALL?
THEN 'TIS THY BROW UPON WHICH MADNESS RESTS--AND FOR THINE OWN SAFETY, YE MUST BE SUBDUED!
THE LOYAL HEIMDALL PURSES HIS LIPS, AND THE TRUMPET OF VIGILANCE SOUNDS ITS CLARION CALL!
THEN, THE AIR IS ABRUPTLY FILLED WITH THE THUNDEROUS CLATTER OF IRON-CLAD HOOVES POUNDING OVER COBBLESTONES OF GOLD--
--AND, WITH THE CRY OF BATTLE RISING AMONG THEM, ODIN'S OWN ELITE GUARD CHARGES FORTH--
--STRAIGHT TOWARDS A STEADFAST WALL OF FLESH!
THEY HEED THEE NOT, FRIEND THOR!
I WILL SAY THEE ONCE, GOOD WARRIORS--LET US PASS!
STILL DO THEY RACE TOWARD US, HATRED GLEAMING IN THEIR EYES!
REFUSE--AND THE BLOOD THAT IS SPILT WILL BE ON YOUR HANDS!

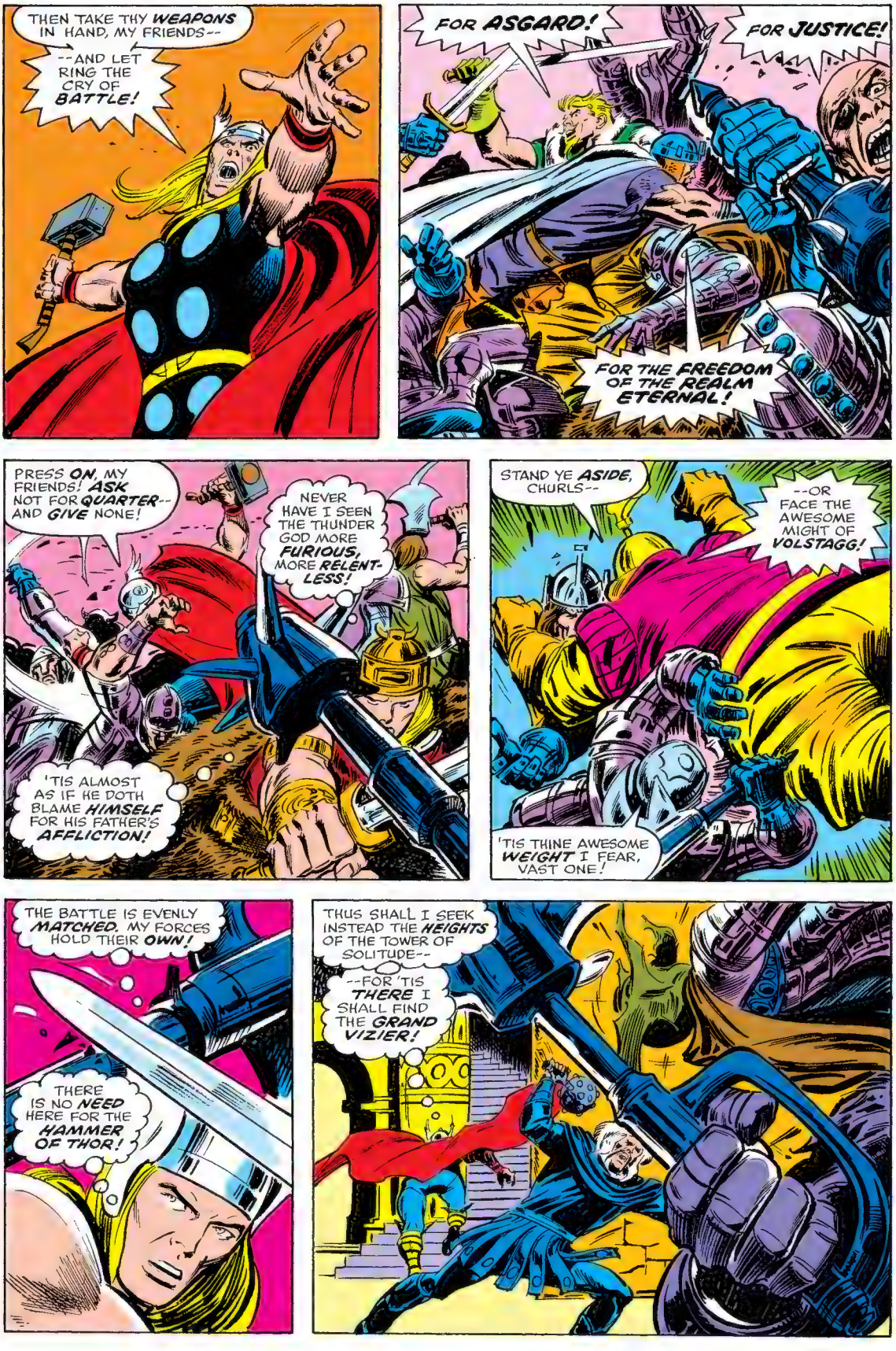
THEN HAVE AT THEM, MY BROTHERS-IN-ARMS!
AND SHAMED BE HE WHO FIRST CRIES HOLD!
WE STRIKE NOW FOR THE VERY SOUL OF OMNIPOTENT ODIN!
AYE-- FOR ODIN!!
FOR ASSSGAAARRDD!!!
STAND YE BACK, YE RABBLE-- BACK!!
CHOOM
NAUGHT THAT LIVES MAY STAY ME FROM MY FATHER'S SIDE!
THERE ARE AS MANY AS THE PEBBLES UPON THE BEACH, FRIEND FANDRAL!
THRAKK!
THEN LIKE THE PEBBLES, LET THEM BE CRUSHED BEFORE OUR UNRELENTING TIDE!

THOUGH IT DOTH GRIEVE ME TO LIFT MY SWORD AGAINST MY FELLOW IMMORTALS, STILL WILL I STRIKE WITHOUT MERCY--
--FOR ODIN AND THE REALM ETERNAL!
THEN STRIKE SWIFTLY, GOOD BALDER--
--AND MAKE THINE EVERY BLOW COUNT!
FOR INTERMINABLE MOMENTS, THE BATTLE RAGES...
...AND THEN, ALL AT ONCE--THERE IS SILENCE!
THE STRUGGLE BE DONE, MY BRETHREN.
THERE BE NONE LEFT TO STAND AGAINST US!
NAY, THUNDER GOD! ONE REMAINS--AND HE SHALL OPPOSE THEE UNTO DEATH!
MILORD, LOOK BEHIND THEE!
IF THOU WOULDST STILL DEFY THY FATHER'S DECREE, MY PRINCE--THEN BEST SLAY ME, AND BE DONE WITH IT!
FOR ONLY IN DEATH WILL LOYAL HEIMDALL BETRAY HIS POST!
NAY, VIGILANT ONE! THOU ART FAR TOO NOBLE TO THROW THY LIFE AWAY WITH SO FUTILE A GESTURE!
THUS DOES VOLSTAGG GRANT THEE THE GIFT OF SLEEP, MY GOOD AND FAITHFUL FRIEND...
...AND MAYEST THOU FORGIVE ME WHEN THOU DOST AT LAST AWAKEN!
H-HE LIES SO STILL, FRIEND THOR. HAVE I...?
NAY, VAST ONE. THOU DIDST ONLY WOUND HIS DIGNITY. GOOD HEIMDALL WILL RECOVER...
...AND THE BARDS WILL SOME DAY SING OF HIS VALOR!

NOW GATHER THE CLOAKS OF THE FALLEN ABOUT YE, MY FRIENDS, ERE WE ENTER THE CITY ROYAL.
'TWOULD NOT DO FOR US TO BE RECOGNIZED ERE WE DESIRE IT SO!
I FEAR, MILORD, 'TWILL NOT BE THE CITY THOU DOST REMEMBER!
AYE, BRAVE BALDER. IT APPEARS THOU SPEAKEST A'RIGHT!
VERILY, THE GOLDEN REALM DOTH SEEM SOMEHOW SORELY TARNISHED!
NE'ER BEFORE HAVE I SEEN SUCH SQUALOR IN THE STREETS...SUCH PAIN AND CONFUSION ETCHED UPON THE FACES OF THE PEOPLE!
MY FATHER HATH DONE ALL THIS?
AYE, MY PRINCE. YET STRANGELY, DESPITE ALL THIS, STILL DO MOST OF THE MASSES STAND BESIDE OUR MONARCH MOST MAD...
...OUT OF BLIND OBEDIENCE... OUT OF MISPLACED LOYALTY... OR MAYHAP, OUT OF FEAR!
THEN WE WILL BE SORELY OUT-NUMBERED IF WE ARE FORCED TO STRIKE AGAINST MY FATHER!
AYE, THUNDER GOD, WE WILL BE OUT-NUMBERED INDEED...
...BUT WE WILL NOT BE ALONE!
WHAT MEANEST THOU, BRAVE ONE?
PRAY SEE FOR THYSELF, MILORD.
A HANDFUL OF GOOD WARRIORS, HUDDLED LIKE DARK CONSPIRATORS ABOUT THE CANDLELIGHT!
INDEED WE ARE NOT MANY, LORD THOR--
--BUT OUR VERY LIVES ARE PLEDGED TO SAVE IMMORTAL ASGARD!

MIGHTY HILDEGARDE...AND THE FAIR KRISTA! I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT TO FIND YE HERE!
AND WELL THOU WOULDST INDEED, THUNDER GOD!
THERE IS NAUGHT WE WOULD NOT VENTURE TO FREE THE MIND OF ALMIGHTY ODIN!
SO SPEAKS BRODAG THE BLACK AS WELL, MILORD!
AND HOLVAR OF THE SINGLE EYE ECHOES HIS WORDS!
COSAK THE CRIMSON-HAIRED WOULD KNOW WHEN WE BEGIN OUR CAMPAIGN!
SKOVAL THE SHAGGY ONE WOULD BE ON WITH IT, MILORD!
THY LOYALTY DOES ME GREAT HONOR, WARRIORS-- BUT BEFORE WE MAY MOVE TO FREE NOBLE ODIN, WE MUST...
WE MUST FIRST HAVE A VIABLE BATTLE PLAN, THOR!
IF YOU WISH TO CURE YOUR FATHER'S INSANITY, YOU MUST FIRST KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON IN HIS MIND...
...AND NO ONE KNOWS THE MIND OF THE ALL-FATHER BETTER THAN HIS FAITHFUL FRIEND AND ADVISOR...
...THE WISE AND GENTLE GRAND VIZIER!
IF YOU WOULD FREE THE MIND OF ODIN, THUNDER GOD, FIRST GO TO THE TOWER OF SOLITUDE--
--AND FREE THE GRAND VIZIER!
TEMPER, MILADY. SUCH FURY SOUNDS NOT AT ALL LIKE THEE.
BUT STILL JANE FOSTER SPEAKS TRULY, MY FRIENDS. IF WE ARE TO AID MY FATHER, WE MUST ASSAULT THE TOWER OF SOLITUDE--
--AND WE MUST DO SO TONIGHT!
WHILE, IN THE THRONE ROOM OF THE PALACE ROYAL...
THINGS ARE NOT GOING VERY WELL AT ALL, LORD ODIN!
I HAVE RECEIVED WORD FROM HEIMDALL--AND MY WORST FEARS HAVE BEEN REALIZED!
THOR AND HIS ACCURSED COMPANIONS HAVE RETURNED TO ASGARD AT LAST!


AND WHAT DOST THOU PROPOSE I DO ABOUT THAT FACT, FRIEND IGRON?
'TIS FOR THEE TO SAY, ALMIGHTY ONE. THINE IS THE POWER--
--AND THE THUNDER GOD IS NOTHING IF NOT THE ALL-FATHER'S SON!
AYE, SLY ONE. THOR IS INDEED ODIN'S OFFSPRING.
BUT IF HE DOTH DARE TO LIFT HIS HAND AGAINST THE ONE WHO NOW SITS UPON THIS THRONE--
--I DO SWEAR TO THEE, BY THE FIRE THAT DOTH RAGE WITHIN MY BREAST--
--THOR SHALL BE ONLY A CORPSE!
AND THE FALL OF NIGHT ONLY MIRRORS THE DARKNESS IN THE THUNDER GOD'S OWN SOUL...
WHAT HATH DRIVEN MY MOST NOBLE FATHER INSANE? IS IT MERELY THE INFLUENCE OF THE EVIL IGRON, AS BALDER DOTH SAY...
...OR IS IT SOMETHING MORE?
HAS MY OWN REBELLIOUS NATURE AT LAST BECOME MORE THAN MY FATHER CAN BEAR?
ONCE HE DID ORDER ME NEVER AGAIN TO KEEP COMPANY WITH THE MORTAL JANE FOSTER... AND NOW SHE WALKS THE VERY STREETS OF ASGARD AT MY SIDE.
CAN THIS BE THE CAUSE OF LORD ODIN'S MADNESS? AND, IF SO, WHAT AM I TO DO? IF I MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN THEM, DO I CHOOSE MINE OWN FATHER...
...OR THE WOMAN I LOVE?
WHICHEVER, 'TIS A CHOICE THAT MUST WAIT!
THERE IT STANDS BEFORE US, MY FRIENDS-- THE TOWER OF SOLITUDE!
'TIS THERE, LORD THOR, THAT THY FATHER DID EXILE THE GRAND VIZIER--
--SO THE LEARNED ONE MIGHT BETTER STUDY THE ANCIENT SCROLLS, SAID ODIN...
"...BUT BALDER WONDERS WHAT NEED A SCHOLAR HAS FOR SO FEARSOME A GUARD?"
"'TWILL NOT BE EASY TO ENTER YON TOWER, MIGHTY THOR!"


THEN TAKE THY WEAPONS IN HAND, MY FRIENDS--
--AND LET RING THE CRY OF BATTLE!
FOR ASGARD!
FOR JUSTICE!
FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE REALM ETERNAL!
PRESS ON, MY FRIENDS! ASK NOT FOR QUARTER-- AND GIVE NONE!
NEVER HAVE I SEEN THE THUNDER GOD MORE FURIOUS, MORE RELENTLESS!
'TIS ALMOST AS IF HE DOTH BLAME HIMSELF FOR HIS FATHER'S AFFLICTION!
STAND YE ASIDE, CHURLS--
--OR FACE THE AWESOME MIGHT OF VOLSTAGG!
'TIS THINE AWESOME WEIGHT I FEAR, VAST ONE!
THE BATTLE IS EVENLY MATCHED, MY FORCES HOLD THEIR OWN!
THERE IS NO NEED HERE FOR THE HAMMER OF THOR!
THUS SHALL I SEEK INSTEAD THE HEIGHTS OF THE TOWER OF SOLITUDE--
--FOR 'TIS THERE I SHALL FIND THE GRAND VIZIER!

BUT AS THE THUNDER GOD ROUNDS THE WINDING STAIRS...
COME CLOSER, LITTLE ONE! ONE STEP MORE--AND I SHALL CRUSH YOU IN MY ALL-ENVELOPING FIST!
BY THE RAINBOW SPAN! 'TIS A STORM GIANT!
ODIN HAS SET ONE OF ASGARD'S GREATEST FOES TO GUARD THE AGED VIZIER!
AND, BY ODIN'S COMMAND, ALL WHO SEEK TO FREE THE OLD ONE MUST BE DESTROYED...
SKR
AKK!
...LIKE THIS!!
THY BATTLE-AXE BE SWIFT AND STRONG, GIANT ONE!
BUT AFTER ALL THE MILLENNIA OUR TWO RACES HAVE BEEN AT WAR, THOU SHOULDST KNOW--
CROOM!
--NOTHING CAN MATCH THE POWER OF THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR!
THOU WOULDST DO WELL TO DWELL ON THAT, OGRE, WHEN THOU DOST AWAKEN...
...IF THOU DOST AWAKEN!
AND AS THE MIGHTY ASGARDIAN'S LEATHER-CLAD FEET SLAP SOFTLY ALONG THE GRIM TOWER'S TWISTING CORRIDORS...
MY FATHER'S MADNESS MUST BE GREAT INDEED, THAT HE WOULD IMPRISON HIS CLOSEST COMRADE THUS,
BUT MAYHAP THE WISE ONE CAN SHED SOME LIGHT ON THIS DARK MYSTERY...
...WHEN I FIND HIM!
MILORD THOR! PRITHEE--OVER HERE!
ZOUNDS! 'TIS THE GRAND VIZIER'S OWN GNARLED HAND--!

STAND AWAY FROM THE DOOR, LEARNED ONE--
--AND LET THE GOD OF THUNDER FREE THEE FROM THINE UNJUST IMPRISONMENT!
KKRRUUMMP!
MY PRINCE, THANK THE FATES THOU HAST FOUND ME! THE REALM ETERNAL HATH SUFFERED GREATLY IN THINE ABSENCE!
SO I HAVE ALREADY LEARNED, MOST WISE VIZIER!
THEN IF THOU DOST KNOW OF THINE HOMELAND'S PLIGHT, MILORD-- THOU KNOWEST TOO WHAT MUST BE DONE!
THOU MUST FACE THINE OWN MOST NOBLE FATHER, AND FREE HIM FROM HIS MADNESS--
--BEFORE LORD ODIN DOTH DESTROY US ALL!!
INDEED... MY LIEGE, THOR AND HIS COMPANIONS HAVE STRUCK AT THE TOWER OF SOLITUDE, AS I FEARED--
--AND FREED THE GRAND VIZIER!
AS THOU SAYEST, FRIEND IGRON... 'TWAS TO BE EXPECTED!
THE MOMENT I HAVE LONG BEEN WAITING FOR WILL SOON BE UPON US, SLY ONE--
--THE MOMENT WHEN THE MIGHTY THOR MUST DIE!

NEXT ISSUE: BECAUSE YOU DEMANDED IT, THE RETURN OF KARNILLA THE NORN QUEEN...AND THE RETURN OF THE STUNNING SIF! PLUS, THE MOST STARTLING SHOCK ENDING OF ALL! BE HERE FOR... **THE THRONE AND THE FURY!**

STILL ONLY 25¢
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
249 JULY
02450
THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
EVEN IF THOU CANST REACH ME, THUNDER GOD-- THOU DAREST NOT STRIKE ODIN!
NAY, MY LORD! FOR THE SAKE OF IMMORTAL ASGARD, SON MUST BATTLE FATHER-- EVEN ONTO DEATH!
THE THRONE AND THE FURY!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

LEN WEIN	JOHN BUSCEMA	TONY DeZUNIGA	GLYNIS WEIN	JOE ROSEN	MARV WOLFMAN
WRITER/EDITOR	ILLUSTRATOR	EMBELLISHER	COLORIST	LETTERER	Face In The Crowd

The THRONE AND THE FURY!

HE BESTRIDES THE GLEAMING STREETS OF FABLED ASGARD LIKE THE GOD HE TRULY IS, HIS PACE RESOLUTE, HIS JAW GRIMLY SET, HIS EYES ABLAZE WITH A COLD AZURE FIRE...
...AND LESSER BEINGS STEP ASIDE TO LET HIM PASS--
--OR STAND AND CONFRONT HIM AT THEIR PERIL!
STAND YE AWAY, GOOD WARRIORS!
THE MIGHTY THOR DOTH COME TO SEE HIS FATHER!

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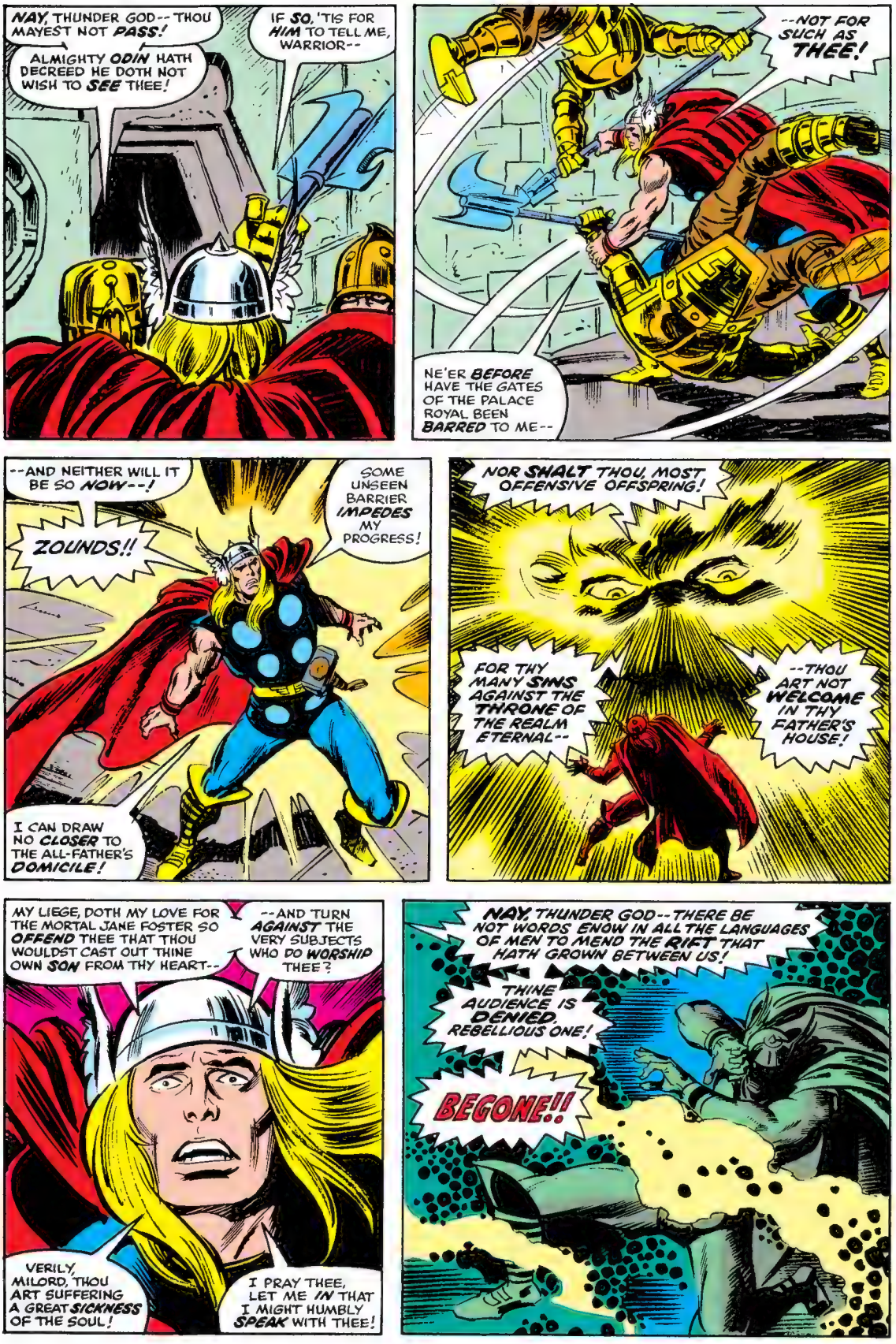
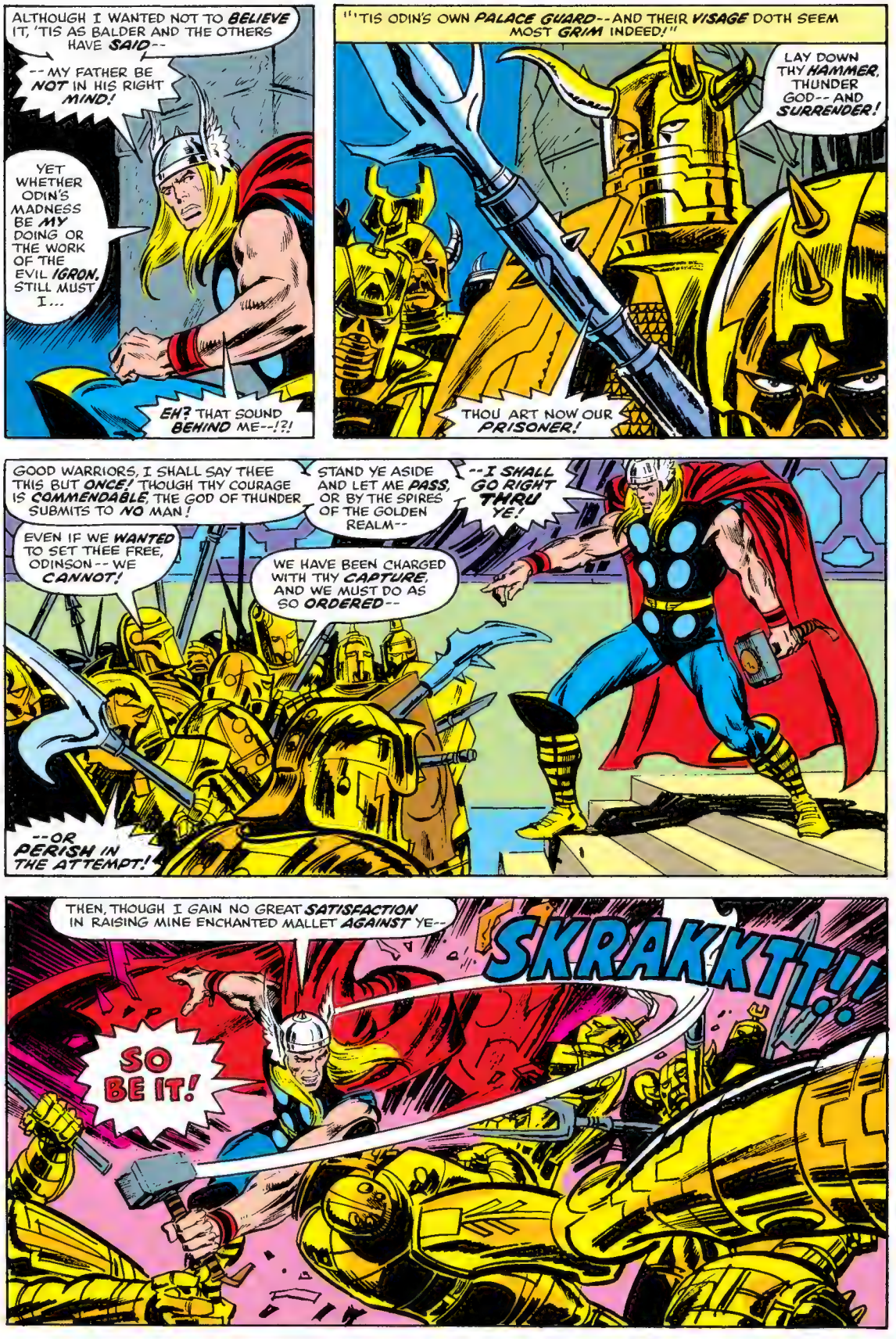
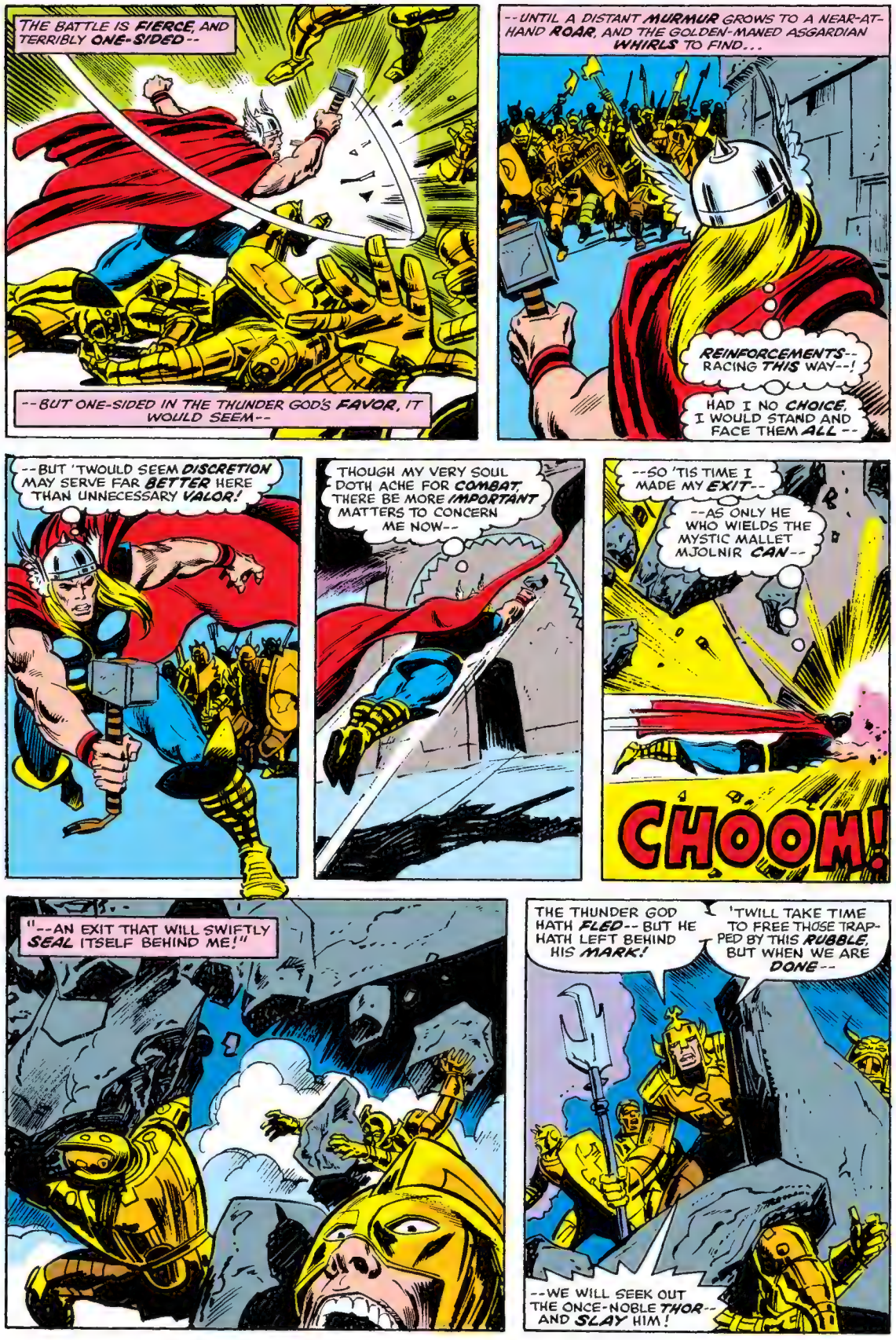
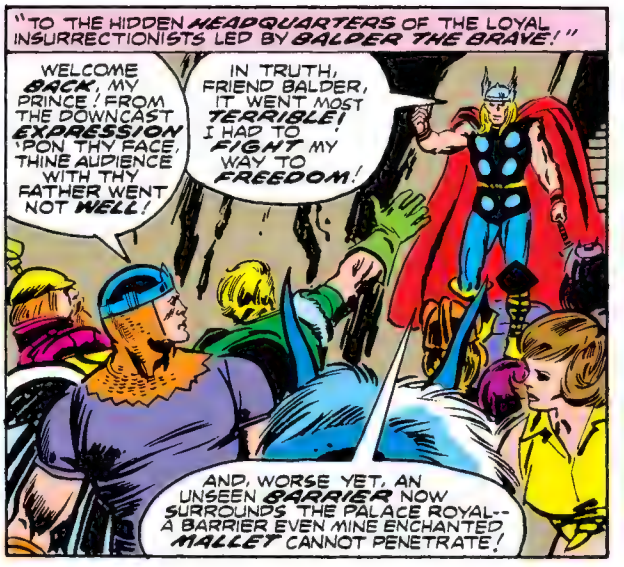
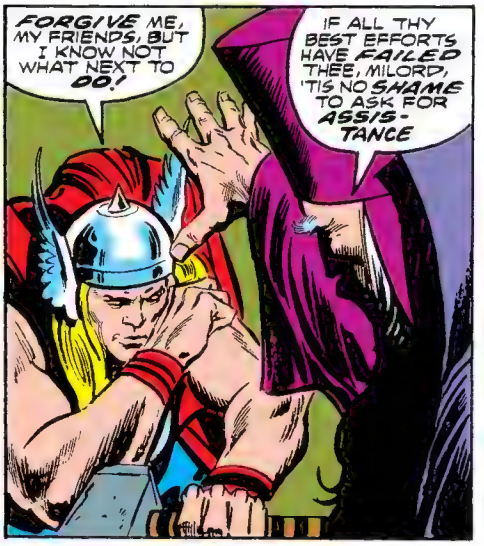

NAY, THUNDER GOD -- THOU MAYEST NOT PASS!
ALMIGHTY ODIN HATH DECREED HE DOTH NOT WISH TO SEE THEE!
IF SO, 'TIS FOR HIM TO TELL ME, WARRIOR--
--NOT FOR SUCH AS THEE!
NE'ER BEFORE HAVE THE GATES OF THE PALACE ROYAL BEEN BARRED TO ME--
--AND NEITHER WILL IT BE SO NOW--!
ZOUNDS!!
SOME UNSEEN BARRIER IMPEDES MY PROGRESS!
I CAN DRAW NO CLOSER TO THE ALL-FATHER'S DOMICILE!
NOR SHALT THOU, MOST OFFENSIVE OFFSPRING!
FOR THY MANY SINS AGAINST THE THRONE OF THE REALM ETERNAL--
--THOU ART NOT WELCOME IN THY FATHER'S HOUSE!
MY LIEGE, DOTH MY LOVE FOR THE MORTAL JANE FOSTER SO OFFEND THEE THAT THOU WOULDST CAST OUT THINE OWN SON FROM THY HEART--
--AND TURN AGAINST THE VERY SUBJECTS WHO DO WORSHIP THEE?
VERILY, MILORD, THOU ART SUFFERING A GREAT SICKNESS OF THE SOUL!
I PRAY THEE, LET ME IN THAT I MIGHT HUMBLY SPEAK WITH THEE!
NAY, THUNDER GOD -- THERE BE NOT WORDS ENOW IN ALL THE LANGUAGES OF MEN TO MEND THE RIFT THAT HATH GROWN BETWEEN US!
THINE AUDIENCE IS DENIED, REBELLIOUS ONE!
BEGONE!!


ALTHOUGH I WANTED NOT TO BELIEVE IT, 'TIS AS BALDER AND THE OTHERS HAVE SAID--
--MY FATHER BE NOT IN HIS RIGHT MIND!
YET WHETHER ODIN'S MADNESS BE MY DOING OR THE WORK OF THE EVIL IGRON, STILL MUST I...
EH? THAT SOUND BEHIND ME--!?!
"'TIS ODIN'S OWN PALACE GUARD--AND THEIR VISAGE DOTH SEEM MOST GRIM INDEED!"
LAY DOWN THY HAMMER, THUNDER GOD--AND SURRENDER!
THOU ART NOW OUR PRISONER!
GOOD WARRIORS, I SHALL SAY THEE THIS BUT ONCE! THOUGH THY COURAGE IS COMMENDABLE, THE GOD OF THUNDER SUBMITS TO NO MAN!
STAND YE ASIDE AND LET ME PASS, OR BY THE SPIRES OF THE GOLDEN REALM--
--I SHALL GO RIGHT THRU YE!
EVEN IF WE WANTED TO SET THEE FREE, ODINSON--WE CANNOT!
WE HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH THY CAPTURE, AND WE MUST DO AS SO ORDERED--
--OR PERISH IN THE ATTEMPT!
THEN, THOUGH I GAIN NO GREAT SATISFACTION IN RAISING MINE ENCHANTED MALLET AGAINST YE--
SKRAKKT!!
SO BE IT!

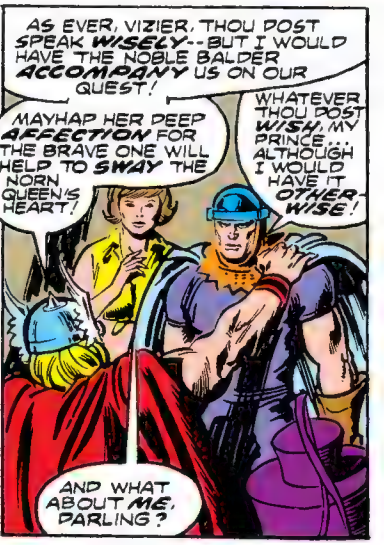

THE BATTLE IS FIERCE, AND TERRIBLY ONE-SIDED--
--BUT ONE-SIDED IN THE THUNDER GOD'S FAVOR, IT WOULD SEEM--
--UNTIL A DISTANT MURMUR GROWS TO A NEAR-AT-HAND ROAR, AND THE GOLDEN-MANED ASGARDIAN WHIRLS TO FIND...
REINFORCEMENTS-- RACING THIS WAY--!
HAD I NO CHOICE, I WOULD STAND AND FACE THEM ALL --
--BUT 'TWOULD SEEM DISCRETION MAY SERVE FAR BETTER HERE THAN UNNECESSARY VALOR!
THOUGH MY VERY SOUL DOTH ACHE FOR COMBAT, THERE BE MORE IMPORTANT MATTERS TO CONCERN ME NOW--
--SO 'TIS TIME I MADE MY EXIT--
--AS ONLY HE WHO WIELDS THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR CAN--
CHOOM!
"--AN EXIT THAT WILL SWIFTLY SEAL ITSELF BEHIND ME!"
THE THUNDER GOD HATH FLED-- BUT HE HATH LEFT BEHIND HIS MARK!
'TWILL TAKE TIME TO FREE THOSE TRAPPED BY THIS RUBBLE, BUT WHEN WE ARE DONE--
--WE WILL SEEK OUT THE ONCE-NOBLE THOR-- AND SLAY HIM!

VERILY, IT SEEMS MY FATHER'S MADNESS DOTH NOW AFFECT ALL THE REALM ETERNAL!
THERE IS BUT ONE POCKET OF SANITY LEFT IN ALL THIS TROUBLED LAND-- AND 'TIS THERE I MUST HIE ME TO NOW!

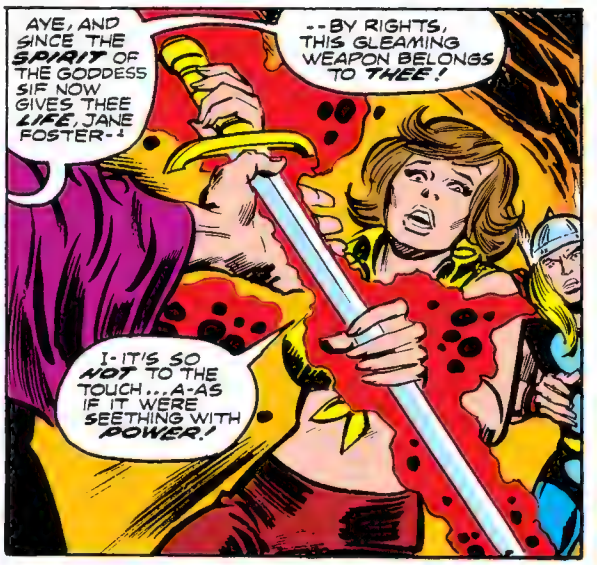

"TO THE HIDDEN HEADQUARTERS OF THE LOYAL INSURRECTIONISTS LED BY BALDER THE BRAVE!"
WELCOME BACK, MY PRINCE! FROM THE DOWNCAST EXPRESSION 'PON THY FACE, THINE AUDIENCE WITH THY FATHER WENT NOT WELL!
IN TRUTH, FRIEND BALDER, IT WENT MOST TERRIBLE! I HAD TO FIGHT MY WAY TO FREEDOM!
AND, WORSE YET, AN UNSEEN BARRIER NOW SURROUNDS THE PALACE ROYAL-- A BARRIER EVEN MINE ENCHANTED MALLET CANNOT PENETRATE!


FORGIVE ME, MY FRIENDS, BUT I KNOW NOT WHAT NEXT TO DO!
IF ALL THY BEST EFFORTS HAVE FAILED THEE, MILORD, 'TIS NO SHAME TO ASK FOR ASSIS-TANCE

COME WITH ME TO THE DARK CAVERN OF KARNILLA THE NORN QUEEN! LET US TRY TO CONVINCE THAT ALL-POWERFUL SORCERESS TO JOIN OUR MOST WORTHY CAUSE!
OUR COMRADES WILL GO OUT ACROSS THE LAND--AND TRY TO RALLY THE PEOPLE TO OUR SIDE!


AS EVER, VIZIER, THOU POST SPEAK WISELY--BUT I WOULD HAVE THE NOBLE BALDER ACCOMPANY US ON OUR QUEST!
MAYHAP HER DEEP AFFECTION FOR THE BRAVE ONE WILL HELP TO SWAY THE NORN QUEEN'S HEART!
WHATEVER THOU POST WISH, MY PRINCE ALTHOUGH I WOULD HAVE IT OTHER-WISE!
AND WHAT ABOUT ME, DARLING?

THOU SHALT GO FORTH TO HELP RALLY THE PEOPLE, JANE FOSTER--AND, THAT THEY MAY KNOW FOR WHOM THOU POST SPEAK--
--I GIVE THEE THIS!
DEAR HEAVEN, THAT LOOKS LIKE...
VERILY, BELOVED...'TIS THE SWORD OF THE LADY SIF!

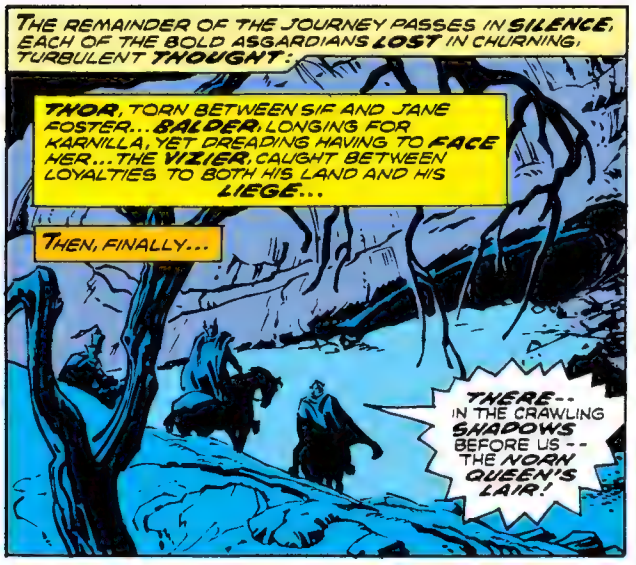

AYE, AND SINCE THE SPIRIT OF THE GODDESS SIF NOW GIVES THEE LIFE, JANE FOSTER--
--BY RIGHTS, THIS GLEAMING WEAPON BELONGS TO THEE!
I-IT'S SO NOT TO THE TOUCH...A-AS IF IT WERE SEETHING WITH POWER!

SHEER AGONY TO HOLD IT... BUT I CAN'T LET GO...
I.... CAN'T...
TOOM!
WRITHING IN SUDDEN TORMENT, JANE FOSTER FLAILS SAVAGELY ABOUT, ACCIDENTALLY SLAMMING THE SHINING WEAPON SHE HOLDS AGAINST A NEARBY GRANITE WALL--
--AND INSTANTLY, THE TERRIFIED WOMAN IS BATHED IN AN UNNATURAL LIGHT--
WH-WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?
--A LIGHT THAT SLOWLY FADES TO REVEAL, NOT THE FRAIL FORM OF A FRIGHTENED MORTAL, BUT RATHER--
--A MIRACLE!
BY BIFROST'S RAINBOW SPAN! IT CANNOT BE--!
BUT IT IS, MILORD--IT IS! JANE FOSTER HATH VANISHED--
"--AND IN HER PLACE, THERE STANDS--THE LADY SIF!"
THOR?
BELOVED?
OH, PRAISE ODIN--I HAVE RETURNED TO THEE AT LAST!
MAYHAP I CAN ANSWER THAT, THOR!
BUT HOW, MILADY--HOW--?
WHEN JANE FOSTER DID LAY DYING ON EARTH, SIF SACRIFICED HER CORPOREAL FORM THAT HER SPIRIT MIGHT GIVE THE MORTAL WOMAN LIFE!
I BELIEVE THAT SOMEHOW BOTH SPIRITS NOW DWELL WITHIN A SINGLE FORM--AND THAT, HERE IN THE REALM ETERNAL, 'TIS THE SPIRIT OF THE LADY SIF WHICH DOMINATES!
THEN WERE WE TO RETURN TO EARTH, WOULD SIF BECOME JANE FOSTER ONCE MORE?
IN TRUTH, MILORD, I DO NOT KNOW! THAT IS FOR THE FUTURE TO DECIDE!
AND I FEAR WE MAY NOT HAVE A FUTURE, UNLESS WE CARRY OUT OUR APPOINTED TASKS--
--AND SWIFTLY!

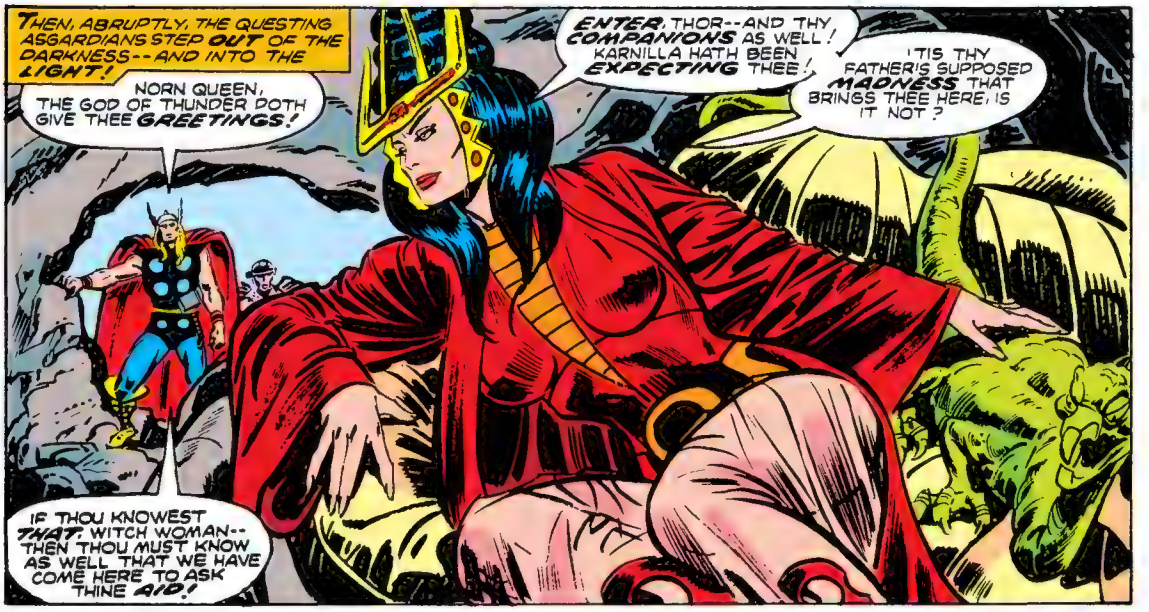
WHILE, IN THE FIERCELY-FORTIFIED PALACE ROYAL...
TREAD WITH UTMOST CARE, GOOD WARRIORS!
IF EVER THE ODINSWORD SHOULD SLIP FROM ITS SCABBARD, THE UNIVERSE ITSELF IS FORFEIT!
MILORD, THINKEST THOU DOST THE PROPER THING? NE'ER BEFORE HATH THE ODINSWORD BEEN MOVED FROM ITS MOST SACRED CHAMBER!
EVEN THY MOST LOYAL SUPPORTERS HAVE NOW BEGUN TO WONDER ABOUT THY VERY SANITY!
THEN LET THEM WONDER, IGRON!
I AM THE WISDOM, THE WILL, AND THE WAY--AND I DO WHAT I MUST TO PROTECT MY THRONE!
BESIDES, SLY ONE, ONCE THE ODINSWORD HATH BEEN INSTALLED WHERE I COMMAND IT, THERE WILL BE NONE IN ALL ASGARD WHO WILL DARE TO OPPOSE ME--
--LEST THEY WISH TO BRING ABOUT THE FLAMING END OF ALL THAT IS!
GENTLY, DOLTS--LAY THE SWORD DOWN GENTLY!
NOW, ASGARDIANS, BRING THE GOLDEN THRONE ITSELF HERE TO ME--AND SET IT DOWN SOFTLY ATOP THE MIGHTY ODINSWORD!
DO IT SWIFTLY--LEST YE DESIRE TO FEEL MY WRATH!
SO! NOW I SEE THY PLAN, MILORD--BUT DOST EVEN THOU DARE SUCH A RISK?
TO ACHIEVE MY PURPOSE, FRIEND IGRON--I WILL DARE ANYTHING!
I WILL RULE IMMORTAL ASGARD--AND I ALONE--OR I SWEAR BY ALL THE POWERS OF DARKNESS--
--I WILL DESTROY IT!

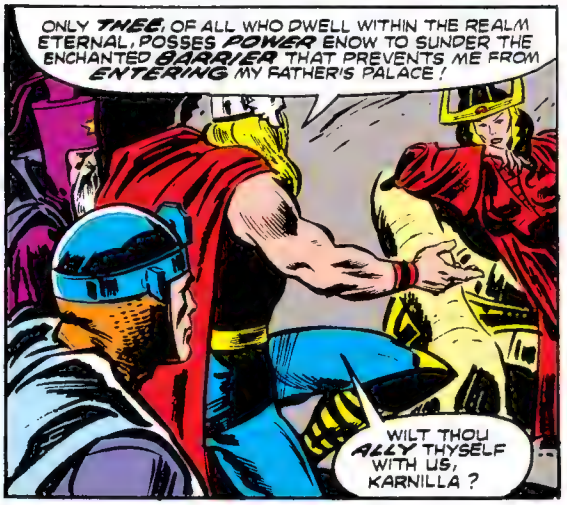
BUT WHILE THE REALM ETERNAL STILL ENDURES, WHY DON'T WE NOW TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE DESOLATE WASTELANDS BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF THE ROYAL CITY--
THOU HAST HARDLY SPOKEN SINCE OUR JOURNEY BEGAN, MILORD! ARE THY THOUGHTS SO SORELY TROUBLED?
'TIS NOT MY THOUGHTS THAT TROUBLE ME, VIZIER-- 'TIS MY HEART! I'D BELIEVED I HAD LOST IT FOREVER TO THE MORTAL JANE FOSTER--
--BUT SEEING THE LADY SIF ONCE MORE, FEELING HER TENDER HAND UPON MY CHEEK... I SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW!
--AND BRACE OURSELVES FOR ACTION!
THE HEART CAN BE MOST FICKLE INDEED, FRIEND THOR! METHINKS THAT IS WHY I'D RATHER NOT HAVE ACCOMPANIED THEE HERE!
IN TRUTH, TO LOOK UPON KARNILLA'S TIMELESS BEAUTY AGAIN MAY BE MORE THAN I CAN BEAR!
'TIS A PROBLEM THOU SHALT NOT LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT, LITTLE FLEA!
BY ODIN! 'TIS A GIANT BARBARIC--A WARRIOR GUARDIAN OF THE NORN QUEEN'S DOMAIN!
THE DENIZENS OF ACCURSED ASGARD ARE NOT WELCOME HERE, INSECTS!
'TIS NOT THY WELCOME I SEEK, BARBARIC--
--'TIS THE AID OF THY SORCERESS MISTRESS!
YOU MAY SEEK KARNILLA, GODLING--
--BUT YOU HAVE FOUND ONLY DEATH!
SKROOM
WE CAME TO THY LAND IN PEACE, ENORMOUS ONES-- BUT STILL DIDST THOU ATTACK US WITHOUT CAUSE, WITHOUT MERCY!
VERY WELL THEN! IF 'TIS BATTLE THOU DOST SEEK--
--THEN BATTLE SHALT THOU HAVE!

THOU HAST MADE THY CHOICE, BARBARICS!
NOW FEEL THE MATCHLESS MIGHT OF THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR--
--AND KNOW THOU WOULDST HAVE CHOSEN FAR MORE WISELY TO HAVE SOUGHT SHELTER RATHER THAN COMBAT--
THRAMM!
--FOR THOUGH THE GOD OF THUNDER IS RENOWNED FOR HIS MERCY--
--SO TOO IS HE LEGENDARY FOR HIS MOST RIGHTEOUS WRATH!
THUS COME, YE HOWLING WINDS AND LIGHTNING!
COME YE FORTH AT THY MASTER'S COMMAND--
--TO SMITE DOWN THOSE WHO WOULD STAND BEFORE ME IN UNWARRANTED ANGER!
THE BARBARICS FLEE IN BLIND PANIC, FRIEND THOR!
'TWAS THEIR DECISION TO MAKE, BRAVE BALDER!
WE HAD NO WISH TO FIGHT EVEN SUCH PRIMITIVE CREATURES AS THEY--
--BUT THE VERY FATE OF THE GOLDEN REALM IS AT STAKE HERE--
--AND NAUGHT THAT DWELLS BETWIXT HEAVEN AND HELL WILL STAY US FROM ATTAINING OUR GOAL!


THE REMAINDER OF THE JOURNEY PASSES IN SILENCE, EACH OF THE BOLD ASGARDIANS LOST IN CHURNING, TURBULENT THOUGHT:
THOR, TORN BETWEEN SIF AND JANE FOSTER... BALDER, LONGING FOR KARNILLA, YET DREADING HAVING TO FACE HER... THE VIZIER, CAUGHT BETWEEN LOYALTIES TO BOTH HIS LAND AND HIS LIEGE...
THEN, FINALLY...
THERE-- IN THE CRAWLING SHADOWS BEFORE US -- THE NORN QUEEN'S LAIR!

HOBBLING THEIR FRIGHTENED HORSES, THE THREE GRIM IMMORTALS STRIDE CAUTIOUSLY INTO THE DARKENED CAVERN'S HUNGRY MAW.
DOWN TWISTING PASSAGEWAYS THEY WANDER, DRAWN EVER ONWARD BY AN ALMOST-ETHEREAL SINGING, LIKE SOME LORELEI'S IRRESISTIBLE SIREN CALL.

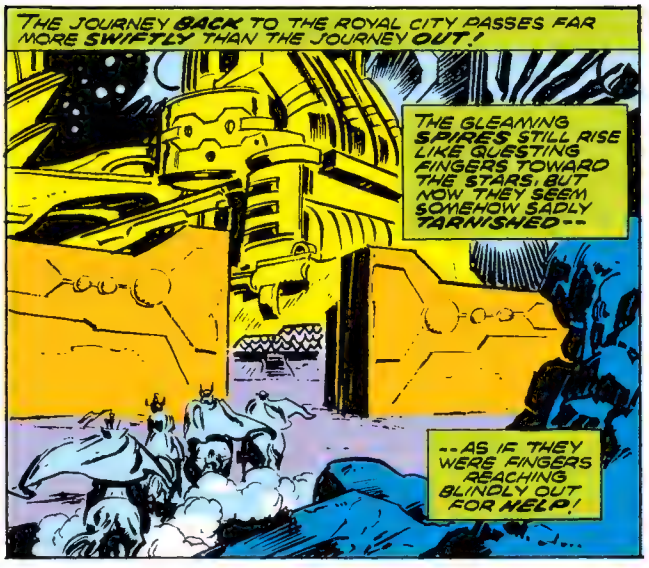

THEN, ABRUPTLY, THE QUESTING ASGARDIANS STEP OUT OF THE DARKNESS -- AND INTO THE LIGHT!
NORN QUEEN, THE GOD OF THUNDER DOTH GIVE THEE GREETINGS!
ENTER, THOR -- AND THY COMPANIONS AS WELL! KARNILLA HATH BEEN EXPECTING THEE!
'TIS THY FATHER'S SUPPOSED MADNESS THAT BRINGS THEE HERE, IS IT NOT?
IF THOU KNOWEST THAT WITCH WOMAN -- THEN THOU MUST KNOW AS WELL THAT WE HAVE COME HERE TO ASK THINE AID!


ONLY THEE, OF ALL WHO DWELL WITHIN THE REALM ETERNAL, POSSES POWER ENOW TO SUNDER THE ENCHANTED BARRIER THAT PREVENTS ME FROM ENTERING MY FATHER'S PALACE!
WILT THOU ALLY THYSELF WITH US, KARNILLA?

I HAVE AWAITED THIS DAY FOR AGES, THUNDER GOD -- THE DAY WHEN THOU WOULDST PROSTRATE THYSELF BEFORE ME THUS!
THY PLEA IS MOST TOUCHING INDEED, BUT STILL I SAY THEE...
NAY!

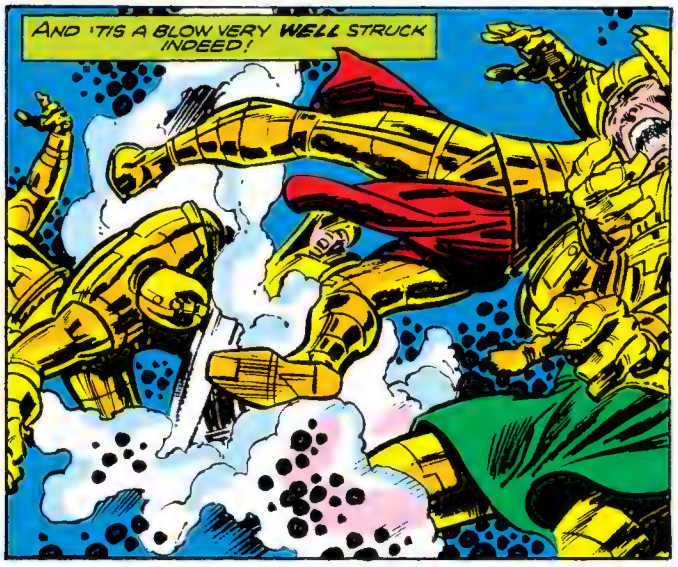
DOST THOU KNOW WHAT THOU DOST SAY, NORN QUEEN? IF ODIN'S MADNESS DOTH CONTINUE UNCHECKED, 'TWILL SWIFTLY ENVELOPE THINE OWN DOMAIN AS WELL!
THINE ONLY HOPE IS TO UNITE THY POWERS WITH OURS ERE THE ALL-FATHER PASSES BEYOND REDEMPTION!
UNITE MYSELF WITH THEE? WHY SHOULD I?
WHAT HAVE ASGARDIANS EVER SHOWN THE NORN QUEEN SAVE HATRED... LOATHING ...FEAR...
...AND WORST OF ALL... SCORN!
PRITHEE, KARNILLA -- LET NOT THINE ANIMOSITY TOWARDS ME TURN THEE AGAINST ALL THE REALM ETERNAL!
'TWAS NOT THEY WHO DID SPURN THE LOVE THOU DIDST SO SELFLESSLY OFFER, 'TWAS I!
IF THOU DOST SEEK VENGEANCE, KARNILLA -- PRAY SUFFER IT UPON BALDER ALONE!
THOU DOST PRESUME TOO MUCH, ASGARDIAN --
--TO EVEN THINK THE OMNIPOTENT NORN QUEEN WOULD EVER DEIGN TO FEEL AFFECTION FOR SUCH AS THEE!
SLAP!
KARNILLA, NOW THAT BALDER'S HUMILIATION IS COMPLETE, I PRAY THEE -- LISTEN TO US!
THOU ART FAR TOO WISE TO THROW AWAY THY KINGDOM FOR THE HOLLOW TASTE OF VENGEANCE!
CONSIDER WHAT IS AT STAKE HERE, WITCH WOMAN -- CONSIDER!
I... HAVE ALREADY DONE PRECISELY THAT, OLD ONE!
THEN THOU MUST KNOW WHAT WILL SURELY OCCUR SHOULDST THOU REFUSE US THINE AID!
WILT THOU HAVE THE SCRIBES PORTRAY THEE AS HISTORY'S BLACKEST BETRAYER?
I...
I CARE NOT HOW HISTORY DOTH PAINT ME, VIZIER --

--BUT STILL, THINE ARGUMENTS HATH MERIT!
AYE, AGED ONE ...FOR HER OWN REASONS, KARNILLA WILL AID THEE!
THEN LET US BE ON OUR WAY, NORN QUEEN!
TIME GROWS MORE PRECIOUS WITH EVERY PASSING MOMENT!


THE JOURNEY BACK TO THE ROYAL CITY PASSES FAR MORE SWIFTLY THAN THE JOURNEY OUT!
THE GLEAMING SPIRES STILL RISE LIKE QUESTING FINGERS TOWARD THE STARS, BUT NOW THEY SEEM SOMEHOW SADLY TARNISHED--
--AS IF THEY WERE FINGERS REACHING BLINDLY OUT FOR HELP!

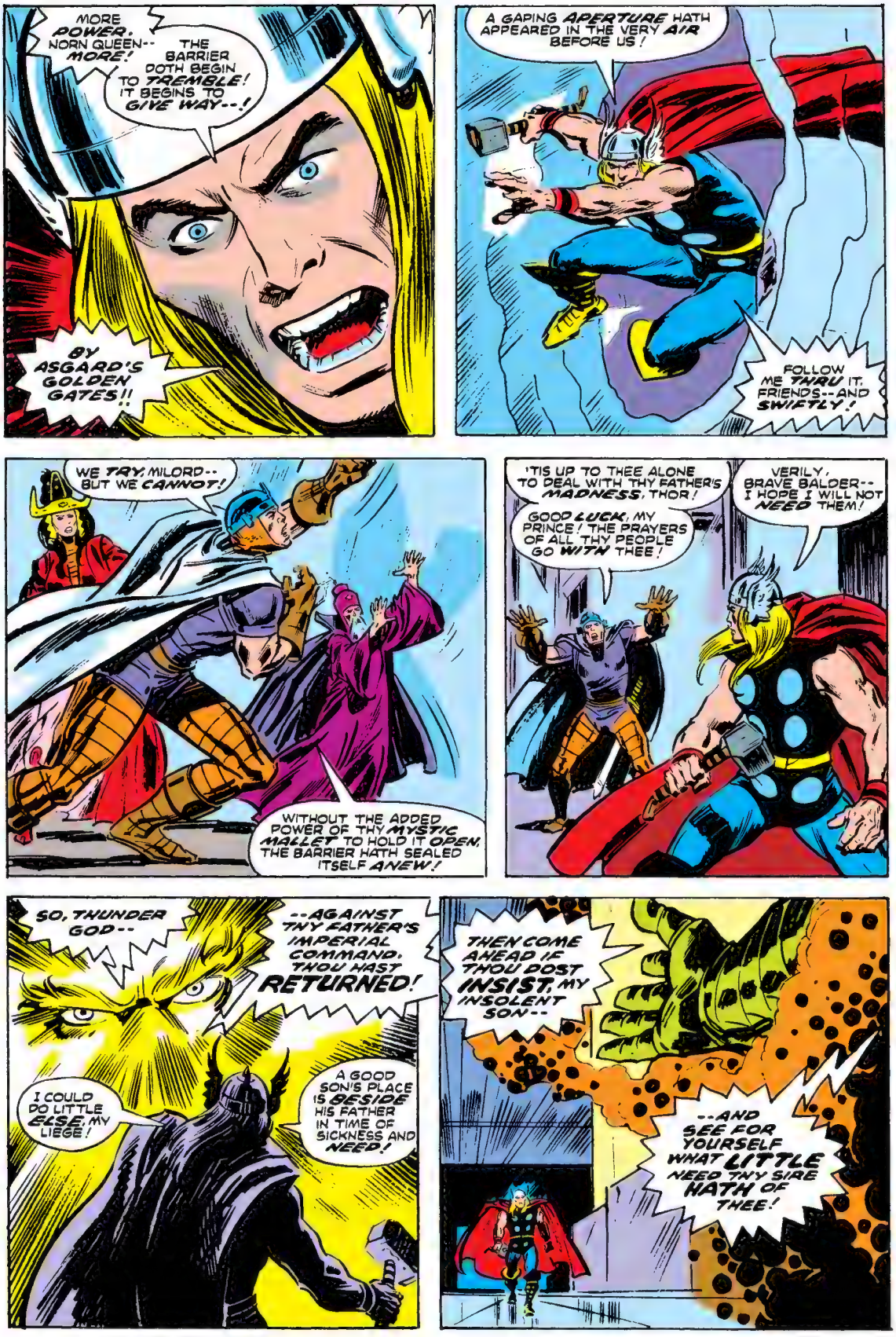
AND SOON, WITHIN THE DEPTHS OF THE CITY ITSELF...
HOLD, MY FRIENDS! IT SEEMS A WELCOMING COMMITTEE DOTH AWAIT US!
BUT THE POWER OF MINE MYSTIC MALLET SHALL SWIFTLY CLEAR A PATH FOR US TO...
THUNDER GOD-- WAIT!

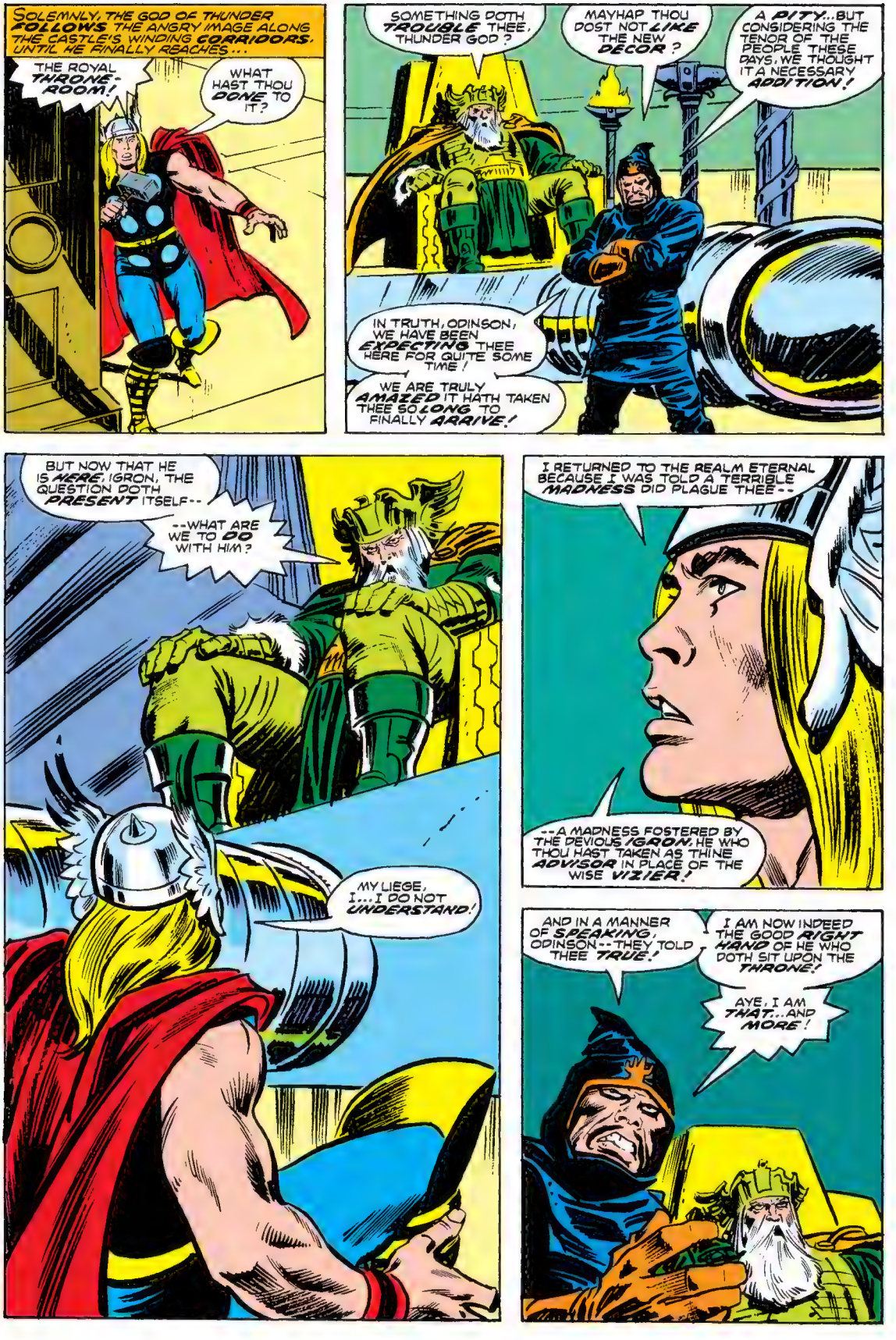
IF I AM TRULY TO BE A PART OF THY REBELLIOUS BAND--
--THEN 'TIS TIME THE NORN QUEEN DID STRIKE HER FIRST BLOW!


AND 'TIS A BLOW VERY WELL STRUCK INDEED!

THOU ART TRULY ONE OF US NOW, KARNILLA!
BUT I FEAR THE NEXT BARRIER BEFORE US WILL NOT BE SO EASILY REMOVED!

THERE! DOST THOU SEE, KARNILLA?
EVEN ENCHANTED MJOLNIR CANNOT PENETRATE THIS UNSEEN SHIELD THAT SURROUNDS THE PALACE ROYAL!
THEN STAND THEE BACK, ODINSON--
--AND LET US SEE IF THE SORCERY OF THE NORNS CAN SURPASS THINE URU HAMMER'S SHEER BRUTE FORCE!
MINE IS THE POWER TO SUNDER MOUNTAINS, TO PART THE SEAS, TO BEND THE VERY HEAVENS TO MY WILL--
--BUT ALAS, IT IS NOT POWER ENOW TO PIERCE THE MYSTIC BARRICADE BEFORE US!
THOU DIDST THY BEST, NORN QUEEN! ONE COULD ASK FOR NOTHING MORE!
KARNILLA, ART THOU INJURED?
IF SO, 'TIS NOT THINE AFFAIR, BALDER! I WILL DEAL WITH MY PROBLEMS ALONE!
NAY, WITCH WOMAN! ALONE EACH OF US HATH ACCOMPLISHED NAUGHT!
BUT MAYHAP WERE WE TO JOIN FORCES AGAINST THIS ACCURSED OBSTRUCTION--
"--OUR POWERS COMBINED WOULD PROVE STRONG ENOUGH TO BREACH THE VEIL AT LAST!"


MORE POWER, NORN QUEEN-- MORE!
THE BARRIER DOTH BEGIN TO TREMBLE! IT BEGINS TO GIVE WAY--!
BY ASGARD'S GOLDEN GATES!!
A GAPING APERTURE HATH APPEARED IN THE VERY AIR BEFORE US!
FOLLOW ME THRU IT, FRIENDS--AND SWIFTLY!
WE TRY, MILORD-- BUT WE CANNOT!
WITHOUT THE ADDED POWER OF THY MYSTIC MALLET TO HOLD IT OPEN, THE BARRIER HATH SEALED ITSELF ANEW!
'TIS UP TO THEE ALONE TO DEAL WITH THY FATHER'S MADNESS, THOR!
GOOD LUCK, MY PRINCE! THE PRAYERS OF ALL THY PEOPLE GO WITH THEE!
VERILY, BRAVE BALDER-- I HOPE I WILL NOT NEED THEM!
SO, THUNDER GOD--
--AGAINST THY FATHER'S IMPERIAL COMMAND, THOU HAST RETURNED!
I COULD DO LITTLE ELSE, MY LIEGE!
A GOOD SON'S PLACE IS BESIDE HIS FATHER IN TIME OF SICKNESS AND NEED!
THEN COME AHEAD IF THOU DOST INSIST, MY INSOLENT SON--
--AND SEE FOR YOURSELF WHAT LITTLE NEED THY SIRE HATH OF THEE!


SOLEMNLY, THE GOD OF THUNDER FOLLOWS THE ANGRY IMAGE ALONG THE CASTLE'S WINDING CORRIDORS, UNTIL HE FINALLY REACHES...
THE ROYAL THRONE-ROOM!
WHAT HAST THOU DONE TO IT?
SOMETHING DOTH TROUBLE THEE, THUNDER GOD?
MAYHAP THOU DOST NOT LIKE THE NEW DECOR?
A PITY..BUT CONSIDERING THE TENOR OF THE PEOPLE THESE DAYS, WE THOUGHT IT A NECESSARY ADDITION!
IN TRUTH, ODINSON, WE HAVE BEEN EXPECTING THEE HERE FOR QUITE SOME TIME!
WE ARE TRULY AMAZED IT HATH TAKEN THEE SO LONG TO FINALLY ARRIVE!
BUT NOW THAT HE IS HERE, IGRON, THE QUESTION DOTH PRESENT ITSELF--
--WHAT ARE WE TO DO WITH HIM?
MY LIEGE, I...I DO NOT UNDERSTAND!
I RETURNED TO THE REALM ETERNAL BECAUSE I WAS TOLD A TERRIBLE MADNESS DID PLAGUE THEE--
--A MADNESS FOSTERED BY THE DEVIOUS IGRON, HE WHO THOU HAST TAKEN AS THINE ADVISOR IN PLACE OF THE WISE VIZIER!
AND IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING, ODINSON--THEY TOLD THEE TRUE!
I AM NOW INDEED THE GOOD RIGHT HAND OF HE WHO DOTH SIT UPON THE THRONE!
AYE, I AM THAT...AND MORE!

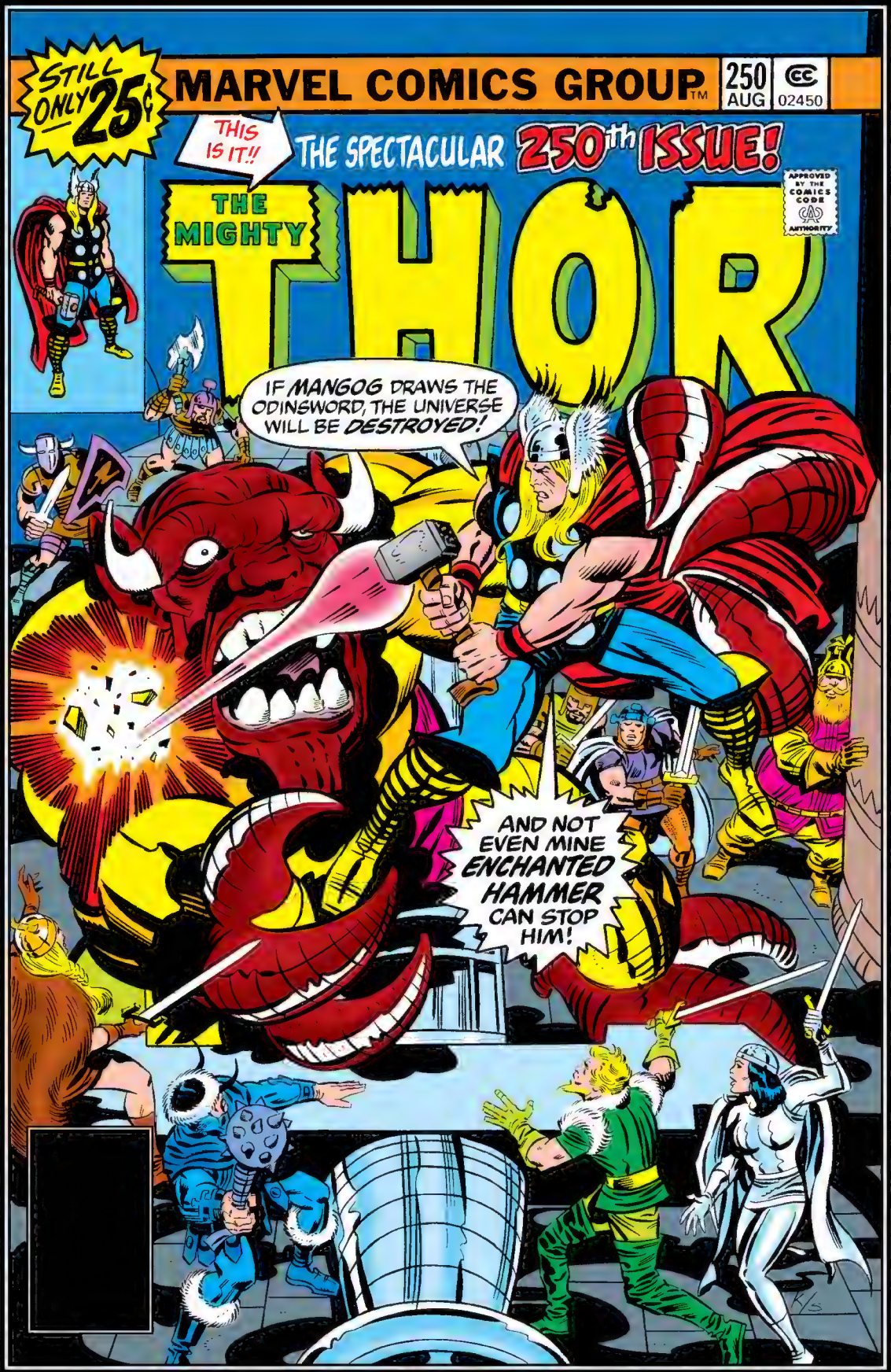
BUT WHY, MY LIEGE? WHY HAST THOU TURNED THY BACK UPON ALL THOU HAST SO LONG BELIEVED IN?
TO TAKE A CRAVEN JACKAL SUCH AS IGRON INTO THY CONFIDENCE... MY FATHER, 'TIS SO UNLIKE THEE!
'TIS THERE WHERE THOU ART SADLY MISTAKEN THUNDER GOD!
TO DO WHAT I HAVE DONE IS VERY MUCH LIKE ME, GODLING!
VERY MUCH LIKE ME INDEED!!
HA-HA-HA-HA
LOOK AT THE STARK BEWILDERMENT ETCHED UPON THE GOD OF THUNDER'S FACE, ALMIGHTY ONE!
THE TRUSTING FOOL STILL HATH NOT REALIZED THE SIMPLE TRUTH!
WHAT TRUTH, LORD ODIN? OF WHAT DOTH THE EVIL IGRON SPEAK?
I PRAY THEE, MY LIEGE-- PLEASE ANSWER ME! I CAN ENDURE THIS CONFUSION NO LONGER!
"THEN GAZE UPON HIM THOU DIDST THINK TO BE THY FATHER, THUNDER GOD--
"--AND THE TRUTH SHALL BE REVEALED TO THEE AT LAST!"
BY VOLSTAGG'S BEARD! ODIN'S VERY FORM HATH BEGUN TO SHIMMER--TO CHANGE--!

THERE, ODINSON-- NOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
IT IS NOT YOUR ACCURSED FATHER WHO SITS UPON THE GOLDEN THRONE OF ASGARD--
IT IS THE MIGHTY MANGOG!
AND IF ANYONE DARES TRY TO TAKE THIS THRONE FROM ME, I WILL KICK THE DREADED ODINSWORD FROM ITS SCABBARD--
--AND BRING THE VERY UNIVERSE TO A SWIFT AND SAVAGE END!

NEXT

IT'S A BATTLE TO THE DEATH FOR THE LIFE OF THE REALM ETERNAL! BE HERE FOR...

IF ASGARD SHOULD PERISH...!


STILL ONLY 25¢
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
250 AUG
02450
THIS IS IT!!
THE SPECTACULAR 250th ISSUE!
THE MIGHTY
THOR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IF MANGOG DRAWS THE ODINSWORD, THE UNIVERSE WILL BE DESTROYED!
AND NOT EVEN MINE ENCHANTED HAMMER CAN STOP HIM!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

JV396

IF ASGARD SHOULD PERISH...!

AYE, THUNDER GOD--'TIS THE MIGHTY MANGOG WHO NOW RULES IMMORTAL ASGARD!
AND IF ANYONE DARES TRY TO STEAL THE GOLDEN THRONE FROM ME, I WILL PULL THE DREADED ODINSWORD FROM ITS SCABBARD--
--AND BRING THE VERY UNIVERSE TO A SWIFT AND FIERY END!!
AND ON THAT GRIM NOTE, PREPARE THYSELF FOR WONDERMENT SUCH AS THOU HAST NE'ER BEFORE KNOWN--STARTING NOW!

JOURNEY BEYOND THE IMAGINATION WITH... LEN WEIN WRITER/EDITOR * JOHN BUSCEMA ILLUSTRATOR * TONY DeZUNIGA EMBELLISHER * JOHN COSTANZA letterer * GLYNIS WEIN colorist * WE PROMISE YOU WON'T REGRET IT!

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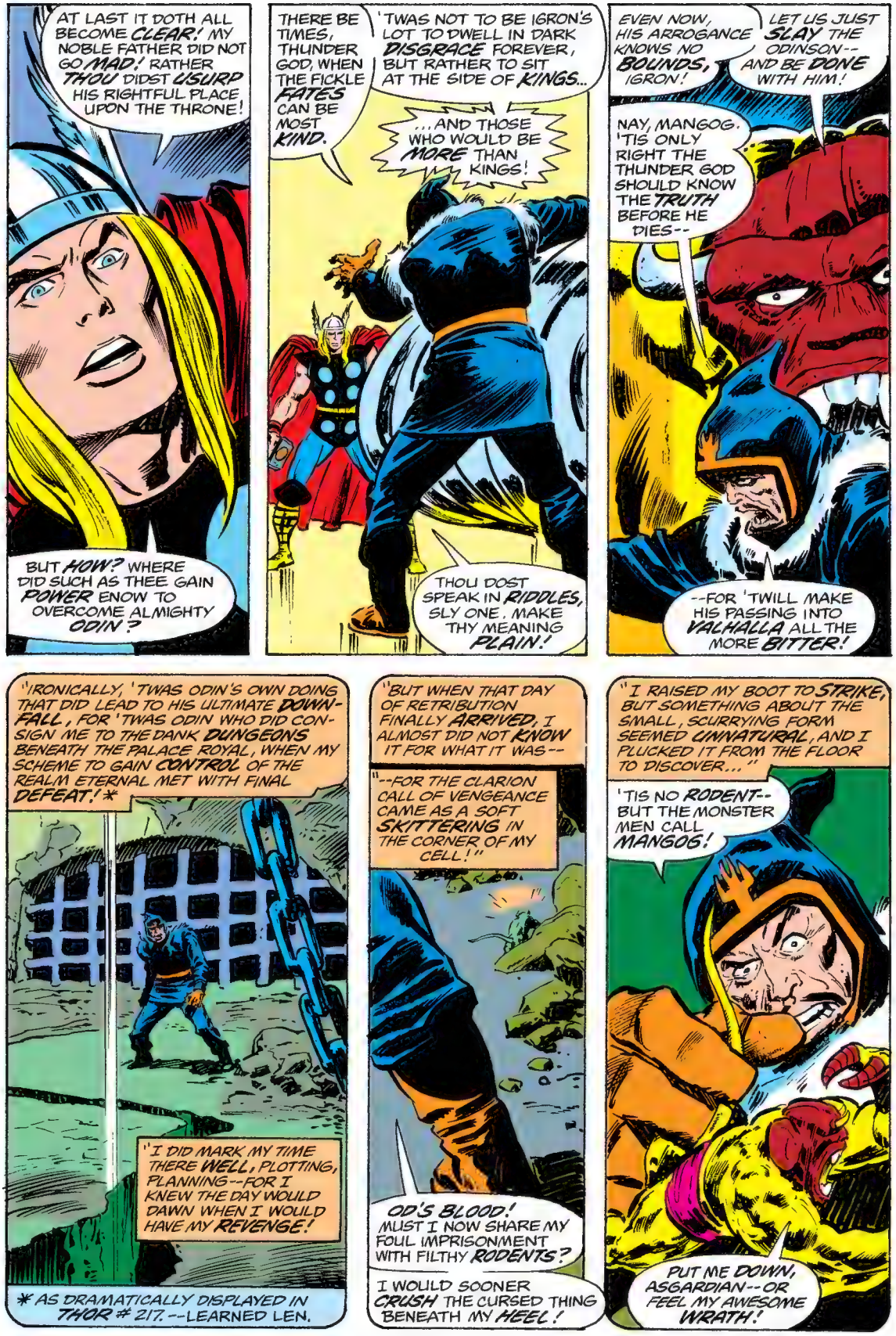
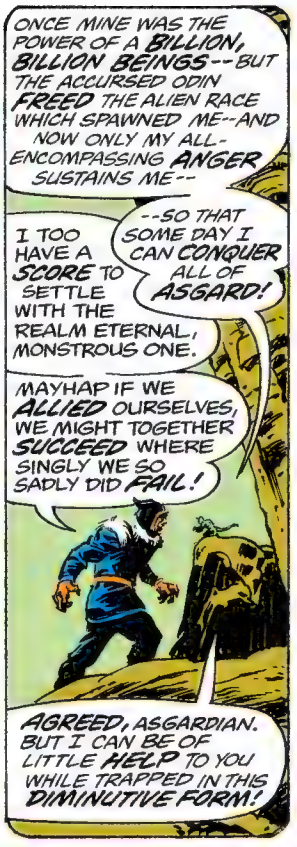

AT LAST IT DOTH ALL BECOME CLEAR! MY NOBLE FATHER DID NOT GO MAD! RATHER THOU DIDST USURP HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE UPON THE THRONE!
BUT HOW? WHERE DID SUCH AS THEE GAIN POWER ENOW TO OVERCOME ALMIGHTY ODIN?
THERE BE TIMES, THUNDER GOD, WHEN THE FICKLE FATES CAN BE MOST KIND.
'TWAS NOT TO BE IGRON'S LOT TO DWELL IN DARK DISGRACE FOREVER, BUT RATHER TO SIT AT THE SIDE OF KINGS...
...AND THOSE WHO WOULD BE MORE THAN KINGS!
THOU DOST SPEAK IN RIDDLES, SLY ONE. MAKE THY MEANING PLAIN!
EVEN NOW, HIS ARROGANCE KNOWS NO BOUNDS, IGRON!
LET US JUST SLAY THE ODINSON-- AND BE DONE WITH HIM!
NAY, MANGOG. 'TIS ONLY RIGHT THE THUNDER GOD SHOULD KNOW THE TRUTH BEFORE HE DIES--
--FOR 'TWILL MAKE HIS PASSING INTO VALHALLA ALL THE MORE BITTER!
"IRONICALLY, 'TWAS ODIN'S OWN DOING THAT DID LEAD TO HIS ULTIMATE DOWNFALL, FOR 'TWAS ODIN WHO DID CONSIGN ME TO THE DANK DUNGEONS BENEATH THE PALACE ROYAL, WHEN MY SCHEME TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE REALM ETERNAL MET WITH FINAL DEFEAT!*
"I DID MARK MY TIME THERE WELL, PLOTTING, PLANNING--FOR I KNEW THE DAY WOULD DAWN WHEN I WOULD HAVE MY REVENGE!
*AS DRAMATICALLY DISPLAYED IN THOR # 217. --LEARNED LEN.
"BUT WHEN THAT DAY OF RETRIBUTION FINALLY ARRIVED, I ALMOST DID NOT KNOW IT FOR WHAT IT WAS--
"--FOR THE CLARION CALL OF VENGEANCE CAME AS A SOFT SKITTERING IN THE CORNER OF MY CELL!"
ODS BLOOD! MUST I NOW SHARE MY FOUL IMPRISONMENT WITH FILTHY RODENTS?
I WOULD SOONER CRUSH THE CURSED THING BENEATH MY HEEL!
"I RAISED MY BOOT TO STRIKE, BUT SOMETHING ABOUT THE SMALL, SCURRYING FORM SEEMED UNNATURAL, AND I PLUCKED IT FROM THE FLOOR TO DISCOVER..."
'TIS NO RODENT-- BUT THE MONSTER MEN CALL MANGOG!
PUT ME DOWN, ASGARDIAN--OR FEEL MY AWESOME WRATH!

BUT WHAT ART THOU DIDST DOING HERE, MANGOG?
'TWAS SAID THOU DIDST CONSUME THYSELF IN BATTLE WITH THE MIGHTY THOR! *
HATRED SUCH AS MINE CANNOT BE DESTROYED, ASGARDIAN!
THE SPARK OF MY FURY LIVED ON--AND 'TIS THAT WHICH YOU SEE BEFORE YOU!
*BACK IN THOR #198, RIGHT?--LEN.

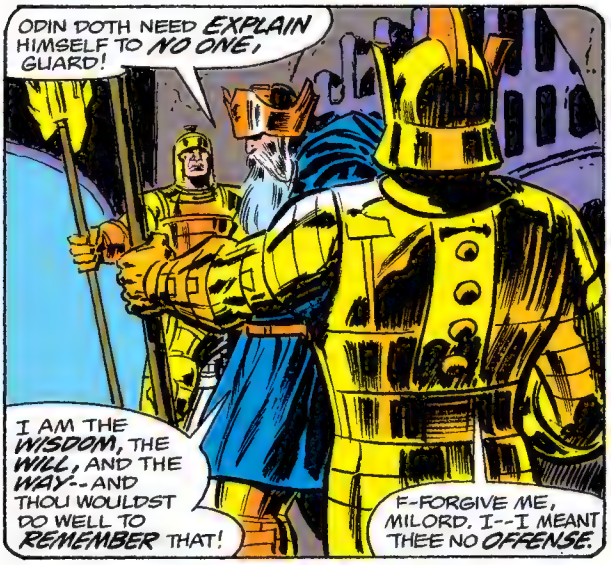

ONCE MINE WAS THE POWER OF A BILLION, BILLION BEINGS--BUT THE ACCURSED ODIN FREED THE ALIEN RACE WHICH SPAWNED ME--AND NOW ONLY MY ALL-ENCOMPASSING ANGER SUSTAINS ME--
I TOO HAVE A SCORE TO SETTLE WITH THE REALM ETERNAL, MONSTROUS ONE.
--SO THAT SOME DAY I CAN CONQUER ALL OF ASGARD!
MAYHAP IF WE ALLIED OURSELVES, WE MIGHT TOGETHER SUCCEED WHERE SINGLY WE SO SADLY DID FAIL!
AGREED, ASGARDIAN. BUT I CAN BE OF LITTLE HELP TO YOU WHILE TRAPPED IN THIS DIMINUTIVE FORM!

THEN THOU SHALT REGAIN THY LONG-LOST POWER, MIGHTY ONE!
FOR IGRON DOTH KNOW THE ARCANE SECRETS OF THE EVIL LOKI--
--AND THUS THERE IS LITTLE I CANNOT ACCOMPLISH!

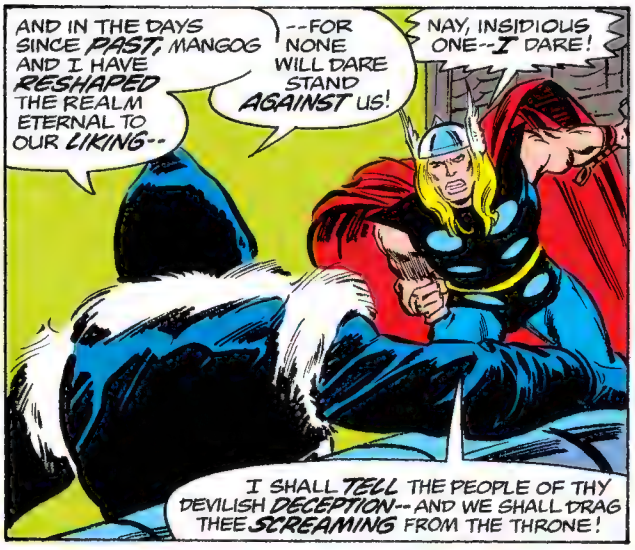
AGAIN I CAN FEEL THE POWER COURSING THRU ME LIKE QUICKSILVER!
BUT WHERE DOES MY NEWFOUND STRENGTH COME FROM?
FROM THE VERY CITIZENS OF ASGARD, MY FRIEND!
UNBEKNOWNST TO THEM, I DID DRAIN A PORTION OF THE ETERNAL LIFE-FORCE FROM EACH--AND DID SIPHON IT INTO THEE! *
IT WILL NOT SUSTAIN THEE FOREVER-- BUT FOR NOW, 'TWILL SERVE!
*WHICH FINALLY EXPLAINS THE STRANGE LETHARGY THAT BEFELL ASGARD BACK IN ISSUE #240 --LEN AGAIN.

THE IRONY OF IT PLEASES ME, IGRON--BUT ALL THE POWER IN THE UNIVERSE WILL NOT HELP US SO LONG AS THE ACCURSED ODIN STILL LIVES!
EVEN OUR COMBINED POWERS CAN NEVER HOPE TO TRIUMPH AGAINST HIM!
AYE, MONSTROUS ONE--BUT THE ALL-FATHER HATH BEEN GONE FROM ASGARD LO THESE MANY WEEKS--
--AND NO MAN CAN SAY WHERE!

NO MAN, THAT IS, SAVE IGRON!
MY DARK SORCERY HATH ENABLED ME TO LOCATE ODIN ON EARTH, BEREFT OF HIS MEMORY!*
IF HE STILL REMAINS THUS, WE CAN THEN STRIKE WITHOUT FEAR OF...
*AS SHOWN IN ISSUES #233-241. -- STILL LEN.
CURSE IT, THE ALL-FATHER HATH REGAINED HIS SENSES!
EVEN NOW, HE DOTH DEPART EARTH IN A GREAT FLASH OF LIGHTNING!*
I FEAR WE MUST BIDE OUR TIME, MY FRIEND, UNTIL...
ZOUNDS! WHAT GRIM MYSTERY IS THIS?
*AS SHOWN IN THOR #242, WHEN... AH, FORGET IT.
ALTHOUGH HE DID LEAVE THE GREEN FIELDS OF EARTH, ODIN HATH NEVER ARRIVED UPON THE GOLDEN STREETS OF ASGARD!
SOMETHING UNSEEN HATH INTERCEPTED HIM ALONG THE WAY!
LORD ODIN IS... GONE!
"AND THAT IS WHEN THE IDEA CAME TO ME.
"ONLY MANGOG AND I DID KNOW THAT ODIN HAD VANISHED. THUS, IF THE PEOPLE OF THE REALM ETERNAL NEEDED A MONARCH TO BELIEVE IN...
"--THEN, BY MY DARK POWERS-- I WOULD GIVE THEM ONE!"
WHAT HAST THOU DONE TO ME, ASGARDIAN?
MERELY DRESSED THEE IN A CLOAK OF ILLUSION, MY FRIEND.
FROM THIS MOMENT FORTH, THOU ART ODIN, REGAL RULER OF THE REALM ETERNAL!
NOW GOEST THOU FORTH, ALMIGHTY ONE-- AND LET THE LOVE OF THY PEOPLE REPLENISH THEE!
LET THEIR HONOR GIVE THEE STRENGTH!
"AND MANGOG TOOK TO THE ROLE MOST SWIFTLY..."
GUARDS, UNLOCK THIS DOOR! THY MASTER COMMANDS YE!
NOBLE ODIN?!? BUT 'TIS SAID THOU HAST VENTURED FAR FROM THE GOLDEN REALM.
WHAT ART THOU DOING IN THE CELL OF IGRON?


ODIN DOTH NEED EXPLAIN HIMSELF TO NO ONE, GUARD!
I AM THE WISDOM, THE WILL, AND THE WAY--AND THOU WOULDST DO WELL TO REMEMBER THAT!
F-FORGIVE ME, MILORD. I--I MEANT THEE NO OFFENSE.

"THEN I WATCHED IN SATISFACTION AS MANGOG STRODE OFF TO TAKE HIS PLACE UPON THE GOLDEN THRONE..."
VERILY THE CROWN OF COMMAND DOTH SIT WELL UPON THE MONSTROUS ONE'S BROW.
MAYHAP SOMEDAY SOON 'TWILL SIT AS WELL UPON MINE!


AND IN THE DAYS SINCE PAST, MANGOG AND I HAVE RESHAPED THE REALM ETERNAL TO OUR LIKING--
--FOR NONE WILL DARE STAND AGAINST US!
NAY, INSIDIOUS ONE--I DARE!
I SHALL TELL THE PEOPLE OF THY DEVILISH DECEPTION--AND WE SHALL DRAG THEE SCREAMING FROM THE THRONE!

THUNDER GOD, THY NAIVETE DOTH TRULY ASTOUND ME!
TELL YOUR SIMPLE-MINDED PEOPLE WHATEVER YOU WILL, GODLING--BUT THEY'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE YOU!

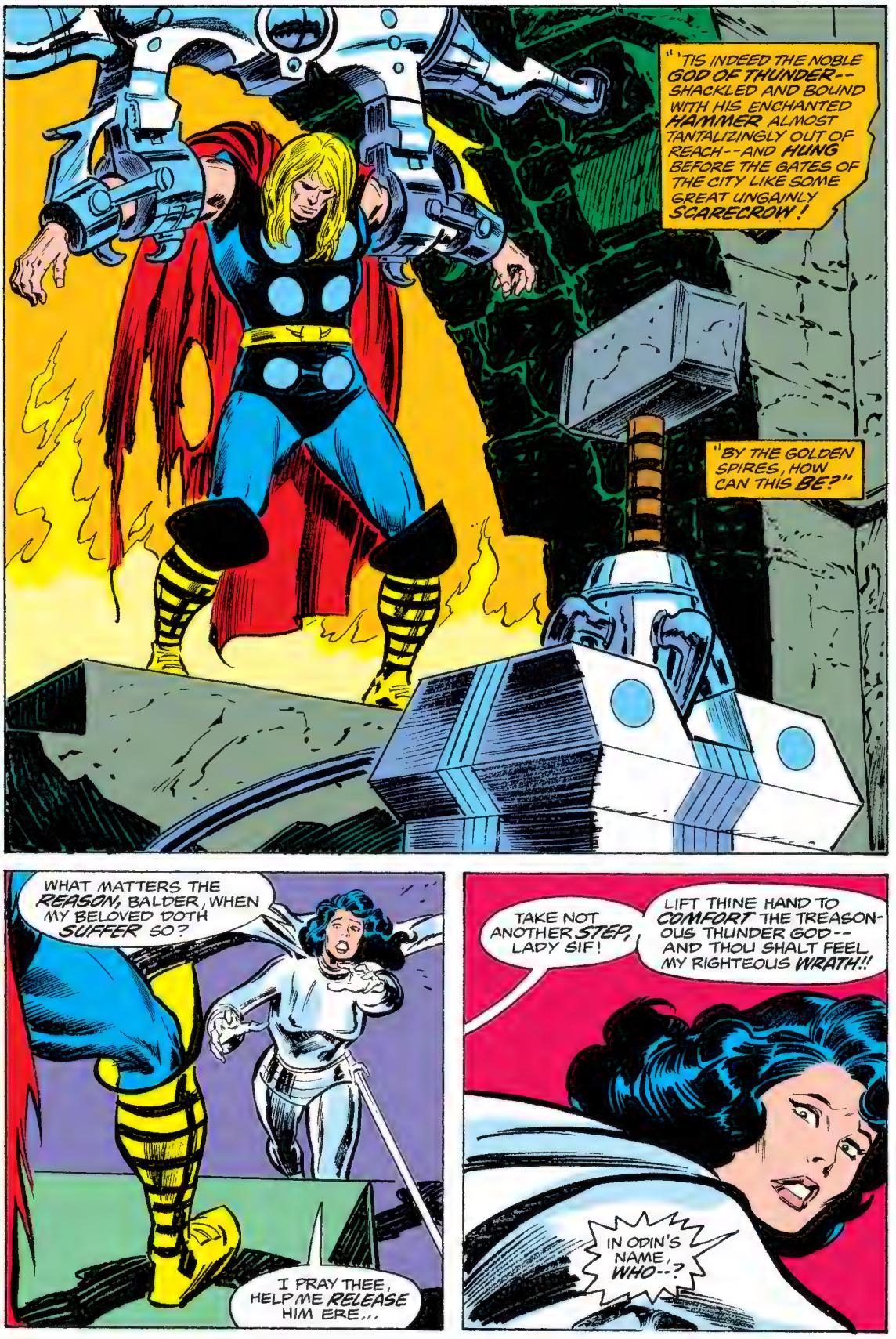
AFTER ALL, MY PRINCE--WHAT PROOF HAST THOU OF ANY OF THIS?

WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE TO SHOW THAT REGAL ODIN IS NOT ALL HE DOTH APPEAR TO BE?

THY FOUL MASQUERADE CANNOT ENDURE FOREVER, CHURLS! SOONER OR LATER, THOU SHALT MAKE A MISTAKE, AND THEN...
ZOUNDS!!
AYE, THUNDER GOD, 'TIS THOU WHO DIDST ERR--
--IN THINKING THOU WOULDST EVER BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE PALACE ROYAL!
MALEVOLENT ONE, THOU ART TRULY MAD IF THOU THINKEST ME SO EASILY DEFEATED!
I AM PLEDGED TO WARN THE CITIZENS OF ASGARD OF THY BASE AND HEINOUS TREACHERY--
CHOWK
--AND THERE BE NOT POWER ENOW IN ALL THE REALM ETERNAL TO STAY ME FROM MY GIVEN DUTY!
WHAMM!
BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, THE POWER OF THE REALM ETERNAL FAIRLY PALES BEFORE THE POWER OF HE WHO IS ITS MONARCH--
--AND EVEN THE GOD OF THUNDER MUST FALL BEFORE THE FULL UNLEASHED FURY OF ODIN--

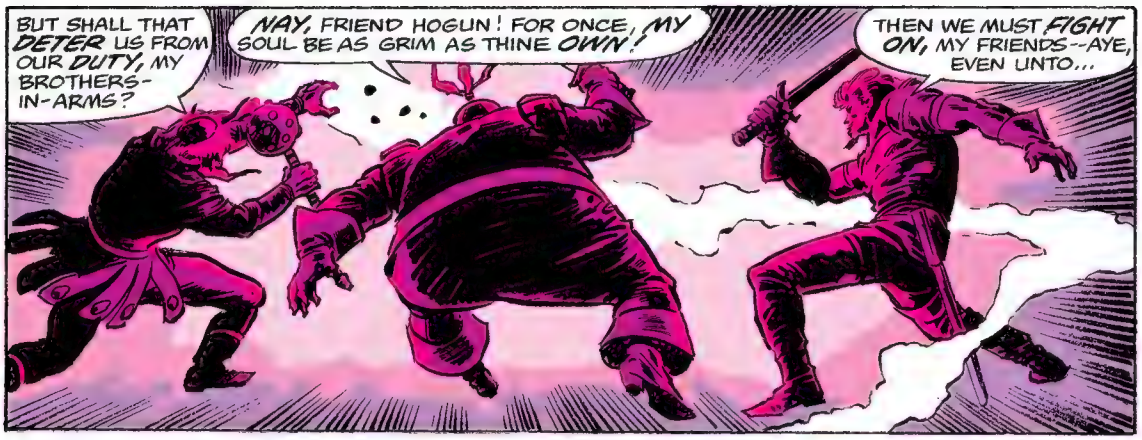
--OR THE FURY OF HE WHO WEARS THE ALL-FATHER'S FACE!
GUARDS, REMOVE THIS VERMIN FROM MY SIGHT--
--AND CARRY HIM OUT BEFORE THE CITY GATES!
THE GOD OF THUNDER HATH CONSPIRED TO OVERTHROW THY JUST AND RIGHTFUL RULER!
NOW LET HIM SERVE AS A BITTER EXAMPLE, THAT NO ONE ELSE WILL DARE COMMIT SO VILE AN ACT AGAIN!
BUT EVEN NOW, THOSE WHO SHARE THE THUNDER GOD'S CAUSE ARE SPREAD ACROSS THE COUNTRY-SIDE--
--EACH STRIVING IN HIS OR HER OWN WAY TO RALLY THE ASGARDIAN PEOPLE TO THEIR SIDE.
OF COURSE, SOME ARE MORE SUBTLE IN THEIR URGING THAN OTHERS.

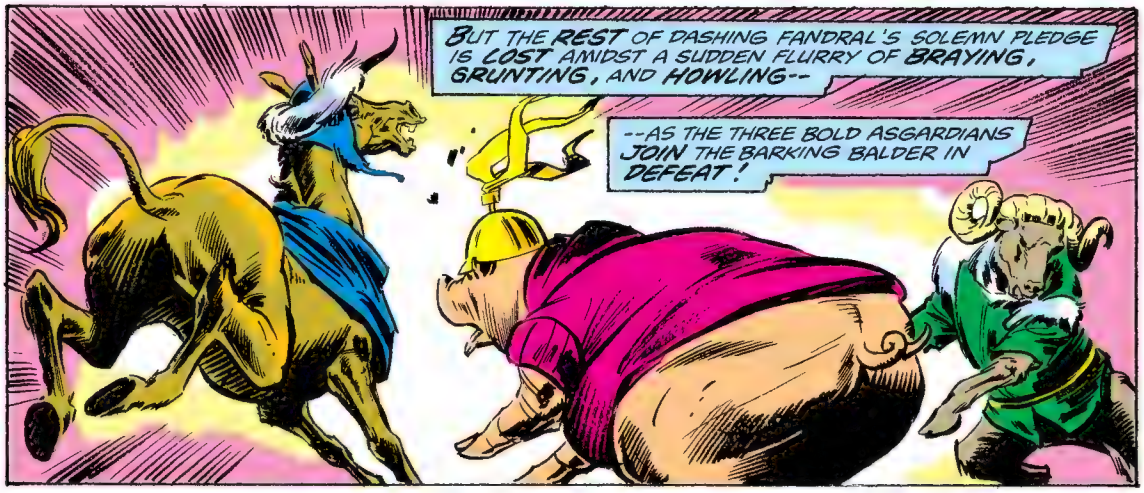
BUT, AT LAST, DESPITE MUCH FRIGHTENED PROTEST, EACH OF THOR'S COMRADES RETURNS FROM THE OUTLANDS WITH AN ANGRY ENTOURAGE IN TOW...
ONWARD, GOOD WARRIORS!
VALOROUS VOLSTAGG DOTH LEAD YE ON TO TRIUMPH!
ACROSS THE REALM ETERNAL, THE SCENE IS REPEATED OVER AND OVER...
HO, GRIM HOGUN-- I SEE THOU HAST DONE WELL!
NO BETTER THAN THEE, DASHING FANDRAL-- OR OUR BRETHREN!
THEN WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR, MY FRIENDS?
ON TO THE PALACE ROYAL!
TO THE PALACE ROYAL--AND VICTORY!!
THE CRY OF BATTLE HOT UPON THEIR LIPS, THE GRIM-VISAGED WARRIORS POUR THRU THE GLEAMING GATES OF THE GOLDEN CITY--
--WEAPONS IN HAND, READY FOR ANYTHING--
--ANYTHING, THAT IS, SAVE THAT WHICH THEY ACTUALLY FIND!
BRAVE BALDER, PRAY TELL ME 'TIS BUT A DREAM!
BY VOLSTAGG'S BILLOWING BEARD!
'TIS NOT POSSI-BLE--!
WOULD THAT I COULD, MILADY SIF--BUT I CANNOT!

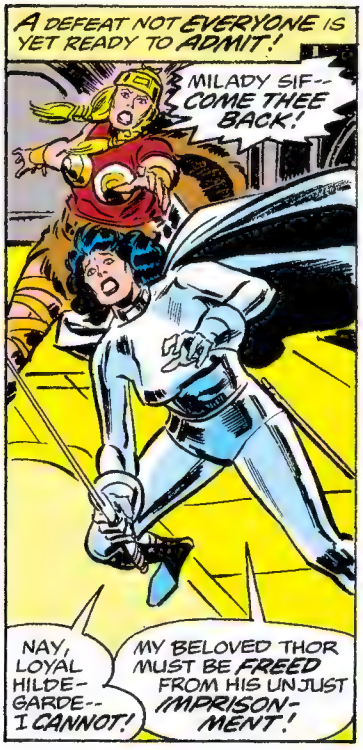

"'TIS INDEED THE NOBLE GOD OF THUNDER-- SHACKLED AND BOUND WITH HIS ENCHANTED HAMMER ALMOST TANTALIZINGLY OUT OF REACH--AND HUNG BEFORE THE GATES OF THE CITY LIKE SOME GREAT UNGAINLY SCARECROW!
"BY THE GOLDEN SPIRES, HOW CAN THIS BE?"
WHAT MATTERS THE REASON, BALDER, WHEN MY BELOVED DOTH SUFFER SO?
I PRAY THEE, HELP ME RELEASE HIM ERE...
TAKE NOT ANOTHER STEP, LADY SIF!
LIFT THINE HAND TO COMFORT THE TREASONOUS THUNDER GOD-- AND THOU SHALT FEEL MY RIGHTEOUS WRATH!!
IN ODIN'S NAME, WHO--?

A MOST WELL-CHOSEN EXPLETIVE, MY DEAR-- FOR 'TWAS INDEED IN ODIN'S NAME THAT THOU WERT COMMANDED TO HALT!
'TWAS I WHO DID ORDER THE THUNDER GOD THUS HUNG THERE--
--AND 'TIS THERE HE SHALL REMAIN UNTIL I DEEM OTHERWISE!
BUT MY LIEGE, DOST THOU NOT THINK THE PUNISHMENT UNSEEMINGLY HARSH?
THE GOD OF THUNDER IS THINE OWN SON AFTER ALL--AND JUSTICE HATH NO MEANING LEST IT BE TEMPERED WITH MERCY.
DOST THOU ONCE MORE PRESUME TO CONTRADICT THY LORD AND MASTER, VIZIER?
NAY, MY LIEGE-- NEVER WOULD I ARGUE THY WISDOM. I MERELY SUGGEST MOST HUMBLY THAT THOU HAST..
HOLD THY TONGUE, VIZIER! I HAVE HEARD ENOUGH DISSENSION OF LATE TO LAST ME AN ETERNITY!
I AM ODIN, MONARCH MOST HIGH OF IMMORTAL ASGARD--
--AND I WILL BE OBEYED!!
LIES.
HE DOTH... SPEAK LIES MOST... FIERCELY FOUL.
'TIS NOT THY... RIGHTFUL LIEGE... WHO STANDS BEFORE YE... BUT RATHER... THE MALEVOLENT...
AARRGGHH!!
SILENCE, PERFIDIOUS ONE!
THOU SHALT SPREAD THY SEDITION NO FURTHER!
WELL DONE, ALMIGHTY SIRE.

MY LIEGE, WHY DIDST THOU STRIKE?
THE THUNDER GOD IS ALREADY THY PRISONER! THERE WAS NO NEED TO...
HHUUNNHH!!
THOU WERT WARNED TO HOLD THY TONGUE, WIZENED ONE!
NOW ODIN SHALL HOLD IT FOR THEE!
WE SAY THEE-- ENOUGH!
THY MADNESS CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE!
THEN IT HATH COME AT LAST-- THE MOMENT I HAVE SO LONG BEEN EXPECTING!
FINALLY, THOU HAST ALL TURNED AGAINST ME LIKE RABID DOGS SNAPPING AT MY HEELS!
THEN IF AS A DOG THOU DOST ACT, BLACK-HANDED BALDER--
--A DOG SHALT THOU BE!!
ODS BLOOD!
WITH BUT A GESTURE, THE ALL-FATHER HATH TRANSFORMED BRAVE BALDER INTO--A CUR!

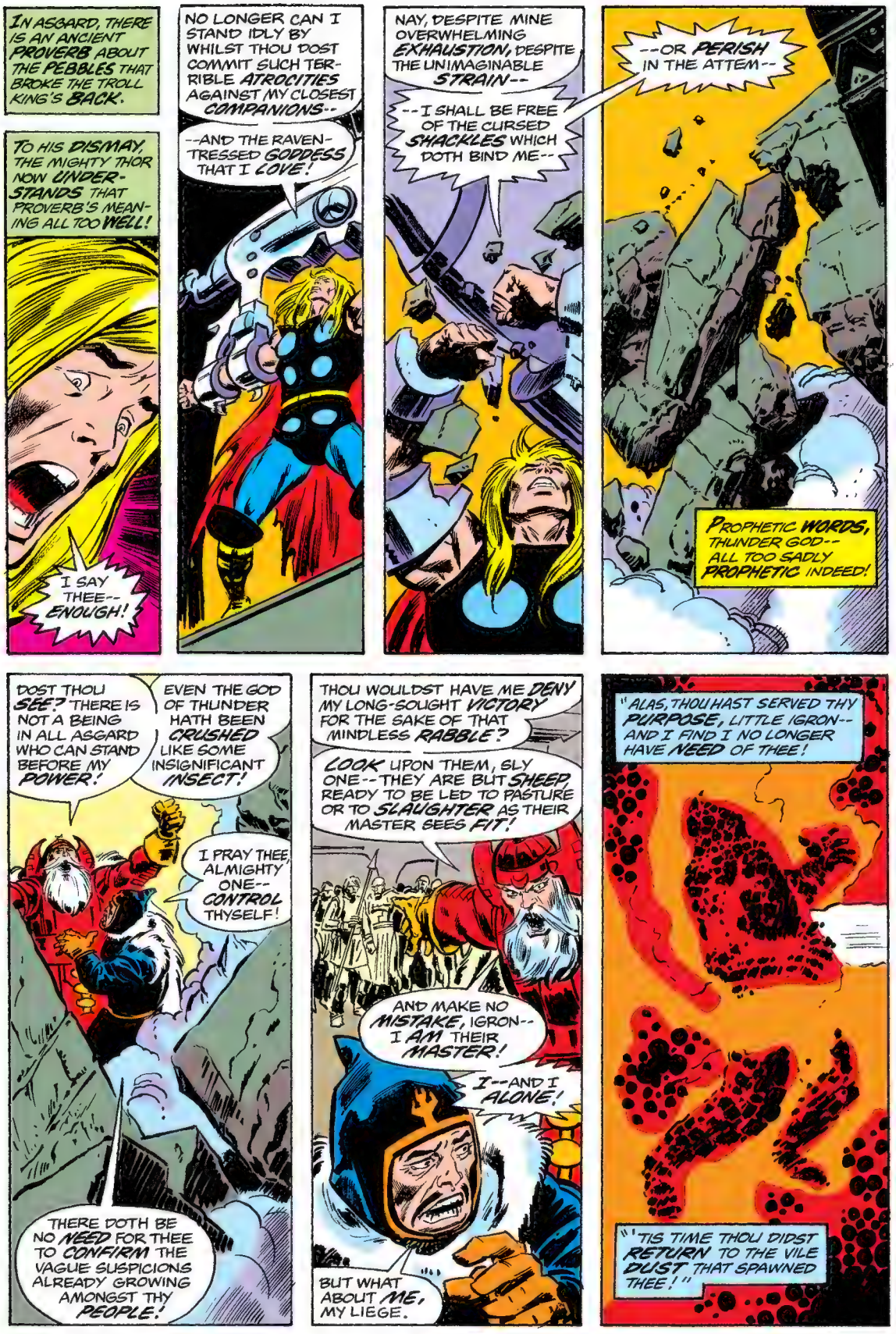

BUT SHALL THAT DETER US FROM OUR DUTY, MY BROTHERS-IN-ARMS?
NAY, FRIEND HOGUN! FOR ONCE, MY SOUL BE AS GRIM AS THINE OWN!
THEN WE MUST FIGHT ON, MY FRIENDS--AYE, EVEN UNTO...


BUT THE REST OF DASHING FANDRAL'S SOLEMN PLEDGE IS LOST AMIDST A SUDDEN FLURRY OF BRAYING, GRUNTING, AND HOWLING--
--AS THE THREE BOLD ASGARDIANS JOIN THE BARKING BALDER IN DEFEAT!


A DEFEAT NOT EVERYONE IS YET READY TO ADMIT!
MILADY SIF--COME THEE BACK!
NAY, LOYAL HILDE-GARDE--I CANNOT!
MY BELOVED THOR MUST BE FREED FROM HIS UNJUST IMPRISON-MENT!

I BEG THEE, LORD ODIN--THOU MUST COME TO THY SENSES ERE... NO!
SO THOU WOULDST RISK ALL TO RESCUE THY PRECIOUS THUNDER GOD, AY?

THEN 'TIS ALL THAT THOU SHALT LOSE, MY DEAR LADY SIF!
LET US SEE IF THE OH-SO-NOBLE THOR CAN FEEL ANYTHING FOR THEE NOW...SAVE REVULSION!


IN ASGARD, THERE IS AN ANCIENT PROVERB ABOUT THE PEBBLES THAT BROKE THE TROLL KING'S BACK.
TO HIS DISMAY, THE MIGHTY THOR NOW UNDERSTANDS THAT PROVERB'S MEANING ALL TOO WELL!
I SAY THEE-- ENOUGH!
NO LONGER CAN I STAND IDLY BY WHILST THOU DOST COMMIT SUCH TERRIBLE ATROCITIES AGAINST MY CLOSEST COMPANIONS--
--AND THE RAVEN-TRESSED GODDESS THAT I LOVE!
NAY, DESPITE MINE OVERWHELMING EXHAUSTION, DESPITE THE UNIMAGINABLE STRAIN--
--I SHALL BE FREE OF THE CURSED SHACKLES WHICH DOTH BIND ME--
--OR PERISH IN THE ATTEM--
PROPHETIC WORDS, THUNDER GOD-- ALL TOO SADLY PROPHETIC INDEED!
DOST THOU SEE? THERE IS NOT A BEING IN ALL ASGARD WHO CAN STAND BEFORE MY POWER!
EVEN THE GOD OF THUNDER HATH BEEN CRUSHED LIKE SOME INSIGNIFICANT INSECT!
I PRAY THEE, ALMIGHTY ONE-- CONTROL THYSELF!
THERE DOTH BE NO NEED FOR THEE TO CONFIRM THE VAGUE SUSPICIONS ALREADY GROWING AMONGST THY PEOPLE!
THOU WOULDST HAVE ME DENY MY LONG-SOUGHT VICTORY FOR THE SAKE OF THAT MINDLESS RABBLE?
LOOK UPON THEM, SLY ONE-- THEY ARE BUT SHEEP READY TO BE LED TO PASTURE OR TO SLAUGHTER AS THEIR MASTER SEES FIT!
AND MAKE NO MISTAKE, IGRON-- I AM THEIR MASTER!
I-- AND I ALONE!
BUT WHAT ABOUT ME, MY LIEGE.
"ALAS, THOU HAST SERVED THY PURPOSE, LITTLE IGRON-- AND I FIND I NO LONGER HAVE NEED OF THEE!
"'TIS TIME THOU DIDST RETURN TO THE VILE DUST THAT SPAWNED THEE!"

IGRON'S DEATH-SCREAM FADES SWIFTLY--AND, FOR A MOMENT, A SILENT PALLOR FALLS ACROSS THE CROWD--
--THEN A TREMBLING HAND POINTS EXCITEDLY--AND A FRIGHTENED MURMUR SPREADS LIKE WILDFIRE THROUGH THE MILLING THRONG--
--A MURMUR THAT FINDS ITS VOICE IN THE DEFIANT FIGURE OF HILDEGARDE!
VARLET, THOU ART NOT OUR GOOD AND NOBLE LORD ODIN--
--BUT THE MALEVOLENT MENACE WHO HATH EVER BEEN CALLED MANGOG!
AYE, WOMAN--AND THERE IS LITTLE YOU CAN DO TO STOP ME!
THOUGH MY STOLEN VISAGE HAS FADED WITH IGRON'S DEATH, STILL NO GOD LIVES IN ALL OF ASGARD WITH THE POWER TO DEFY ME!
NAY, MONSTER--
EH?
--THOR DOTH DEFY THEE--
--UNTO DEATH-- AYE, AND BEYOND!
THOU HAST TWISTED THE POWER OF THE REALM ETERNAL TO THY FOUL WILL!
THOU HAST SOUGHT TO SULLY THE ALL-FATHER'S PROUD AND NOBLE NAME!
"AND FOR THOSE CRIMES AND MYRIAD OTHERS YET UNCOUNTED, SHALT THOU NOW FEEL THE MIGHT OF MINE ENCHANTED URU HAMMER--
"--AND THOU SHALT KNOW IT STRIKES FOR JUSTICE--AND FOR VENGEANCE!"
WITLESS GODLING, YOUR WEAPON WILL NOT STRIKE AT ALL!
MANGOG IS STILL POWER INCARNATE--
WAK!
--AND ALTHOUGH IT IS NO LONGER THE POWER OF AN ENTIRE RACE, IT IS STILL POWER SUPPLIED ME BY THE WORSHIP OF YOUR SIMPLE-MINDED SUBJECTS--

--AND THAT IS POWER ENOUGH FOR THE TASK WHICH LIES BEFORE ME!
NAY, MONSTROUS ONE, THOU CANST NOT MEAN...
THUNDER GOD, I WARNED YOU THAT IF I COULD NOT RULE ASGARD, I WOULD DESTROY IT--
--AND MANGOG ALWAYS KEEPS HIS WORD!
KRUMM
THOR'S WORD DOTH BE HIS BOND AS WELL, FOUL DEMON--
--AND I HAVE SWORN TO PUT AN END TO THEE!
IMPUDENT FLEA!
ODIN'S EYES! I HAD FORGOTTEN MANGOG'S FLASHING TAIL!
YOU ARE ALMOST NOT WORTH THE BOTHER IT WILL TAKE TO SLAY YOU!
AND 'TIS A LAPSE OF MEMORY THAT MAY COST THE VERY UNIVERSE!
FOR MANGOG DOTH SEEK TO REACH THE ENCHANTED ODIN-SWORD--
WRUNCH!
--AND IF ANY SAVE THE ALL-FATHER HIMSELF DOTH DRAW THAT DREADED WEAPON FROM ITS SCABBARD, 'TWILL SIGNAL THE DAWN OF RAGNAROK--
--THE DAY WHEN ALL THAT MAN AND GOD HATH WROUGHT MUST PERISH!
I MUST HALT THE MONSTROUS ONE ERE...
NAY, 'TIS TOO LATE--!
"THE GLOATING MANGOG HATH BREACHED THE VERY RAMPARTS OF THE PALACE IMPERIAL--
"--AND THERE BE NAUGHT TO STAND BETWIXT HIM AND HIS MOST TERRIBLE GOAL!"

ONE MOMENT LONGER-- AND I SHALL REPAY ACCURSED ODIN FOR HIS CRIME AGAINST MY RACE!
ONE MOMENT MORE-- AND I SHALL HAVE MY LONG-SOUGHT REVENGE!
THEN THAT MOMENT MUST NEVER COME TO PASS, THOU HEINOUS BEAST!
THOR?!?
AYE, MANGOG-- NEVER SHALT THOU LAY THY FILTHY CLAW UPON THE ODIN-SWORD WHILST THE GOD OF THUNDER DOTH LIVE!
THEN YOU SHALL LIVE NO LONGER, LITTLE GNAT!
MANGOG EXISTS SOLELY TO KILL--AND YOU SHALL BE MY GREATEST VICTIM!
THINE ONLY VICTIM SHALL BE THYSELF, MONSTER!
CHOOM
FOR THE HATRED THAT FILLS THY SOUL SHALL SOON CONSUME THEE LIKE A RAGING FLAME--
--LEAVING NAUGHT BUT BITTER ASHES TO MARK THAT THOU HADST EVER BEEN!
YOU FELLED ME, THUNDER GOD! NONE BUT ODIN HAS EVER DONE THAT BEFORE!
VERILY, MANGOG-- I AM NOBLE ODIN'S SON!
'TIS HIS BLOOD THAT FLOWS WITHIN ME-- AND 'TIS IN HIS GLORIOUS NAME THAT I DEFEND THE REALM ETERNAL!
THEN IN HIS NAME SHALL YOU BE TORN LIMB FROM WRITHING LIMB, IF NEED BE--
-- SO THAT I MAY REACH THE WAITING ODINSWORD AT LAST!!

BACK, I SAY THEE, FOUL DEMON--BACK! THOU SHALT NOT PASS!
THERE IS NO WAY YOU CAN STOP ME, GODLING!
I HAVE AWAITED THIS DAY FOR TIME BEYOND RECKONING, AND NOTHING WILL STAY ME FROM...
WH-WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME? I BEGIN TO GROW WEAK, AS IF...
NO! I--I'M FADING AWAY! YOU'VE TRICKED ME, THUNDER GOD--
--BUT I'LL NOT BE CHEATED OF MY VENGEANCE!
I MUST REACH THE ODINSWORD!!
I MUSSSSSSSSS.
MANGOG'S FINAL SOUND IS MOST APPROPRIATE INDEED: THE ANGRY HISS OF THE SERPENT FLEEING PARADISE.
FOR A TIME, THE THUNDER GOD STANDS ALONE, LOST IN THOUGHT AND SILENT PRAYER, UNTIL...
BELOVED, ART THOU...?
AYE, MILADY... I AM WELL.
THE REALM ETERNAL STILL STANDS.
IT DOTH SEEM MANGOG'S SORCERY HATH FADED WITH HIS PASSING --BUT WHAT WROUGHT THE MONSTROUS ONE'S END?
WITHOUT THE WORSHIP OF OUR PEOPLE TO SUSTAIN HIM, METHINKS MANGOG LITERALLY... USED HIMSELF UP!
HE DID THINK HE COULD DESTROY THE GOLDEN REALM... BUT HE WAS WRONG.
FOR SO LONG AS MEN OF GOOD WILL DOTH LIVE--
--THERE SHALL ALWAYS BE AN ASGARD!!
NEXT ISSUE:
JOIN THE GOD OF THUNDER ON A GRIM JOURNEY TO VALHALLA, AS THE QUEST FOR THE MISSING ODIN BEGINS WITH A BLAST! BE HERE FOR...
TO HELA... AND BACK!

THOR
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THE MIGHTY
THOR®
TM
FOR DARING TO INVADE VALHALLA, THUNDER GOD-- THY LIFE IS FORFEIT!
AND HELA, DARK GODDESS OF DEATH, HEREBY CLAIMS HER PRIZE!!
IF THIS BE DEATH!!!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

c-34

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

LEN WEIN WRITER/EDITOR | JOHN BUSCEMA & TONY DeZUNIGA ILLUSTRATORS | GLYNIS WEIN COLORIST | CONDOY LETTERER

TO HELA AND BACK

THERE IS A STORM BREWING.
AYE, EVEN THOUGH HE WHO IS ITS RIGHTFUL LORD AND MASTER SITS BROODING IN SOLEMN SOLITUDE, THERE IS A RAGING TEMPEST BREWING THAT MAY SOON THREATEN TO SWEEP WORLDS AWAY BEFORE IT--
--FOR IT IS A TEMPEST BREWING BEHIND THE THUNDER GOD'S OWN ANGRY AZURE EYES!
MILORD THOR?
MAY I SPEAK WITH THEE, BELOVED?

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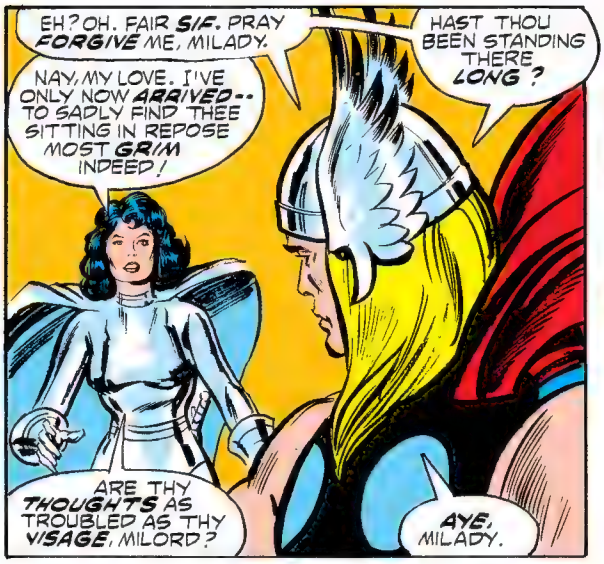
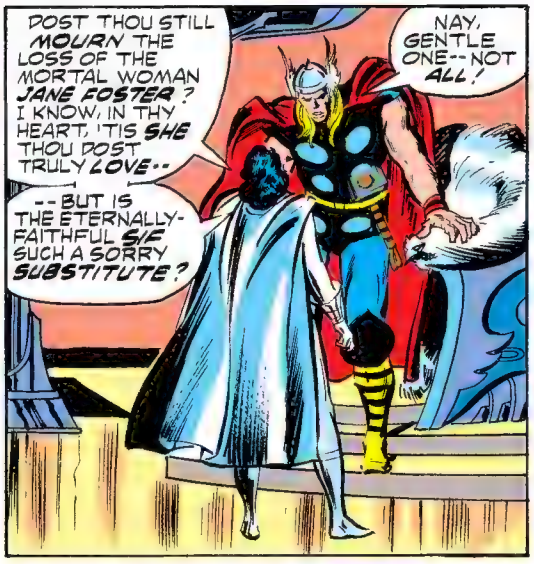
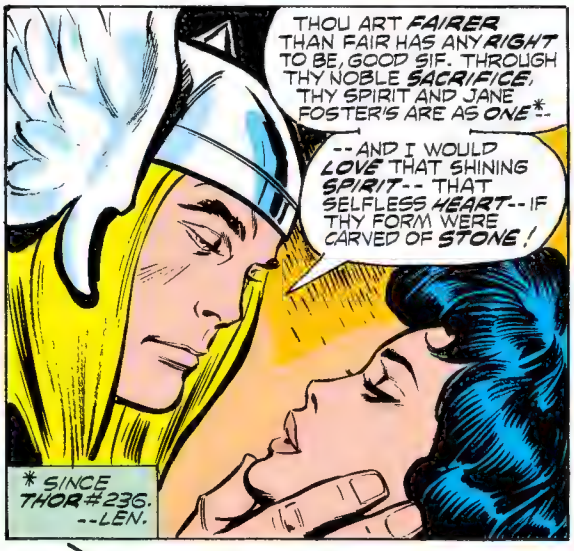
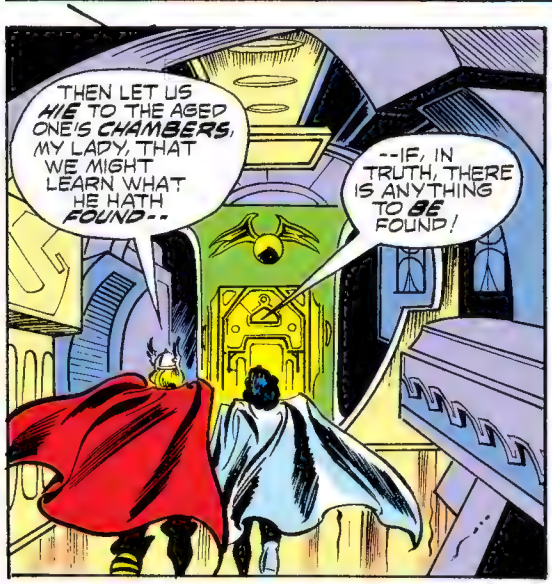
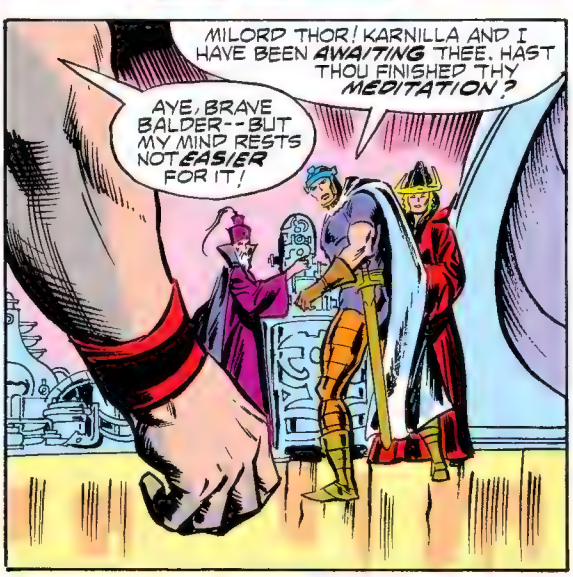

EH? OH. FAIR SIF. PRAY FORGIVE ME, MILADY.
HAST THOU BEEN STANDING THERE LONG?
NAY, MY LOVE. I'VE ONLY NOW ARRIVED-- TO SADLY FIND THEE SITTING IN REPOSE MOST GRIM INDEED!
ARE THY THOUGHTS AS TROUBLED AS THY VISAGE, MILORD?
AYE, MILADY.


DOST THOU STILL MOURN THE LOSS OF THE MORTAL WOMAN JANE FOSTER? I KNOW, IN THY HEART, 'TIS SHE THOU DOST TRULY LOVE--
NAY, GENTLE ONE--NOT ALL!
--BUT IS THE ETERNALLY-FAITHFUL SIF SUCH A SORRY SUBSTITUTE?

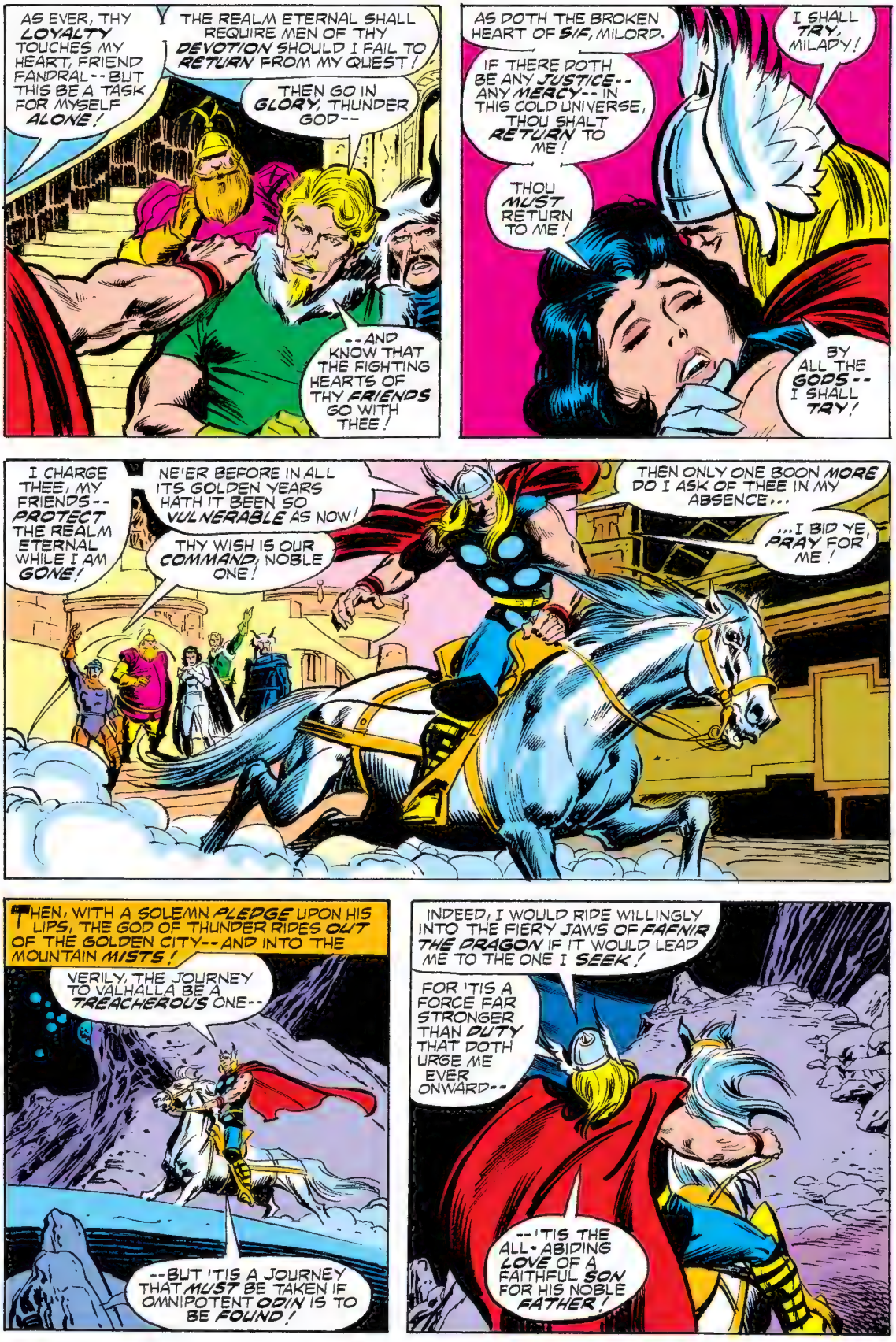

THOU ART FAIRER THAN FAIR HAS ANY RIGHT TO BE, GOOD SIF. THROUGH THY NOBLE SACRIFICE, THY SPIRIT AND JANE FOSTER'S ARE AS ONE*--
--AND I WOULD LOVE THAT SHINING SPIRIT-- THAT SELFLESS HEART-- IF THY FORM WERE CARVED OF STONE!
* SINCE THOR #236. --LEN.

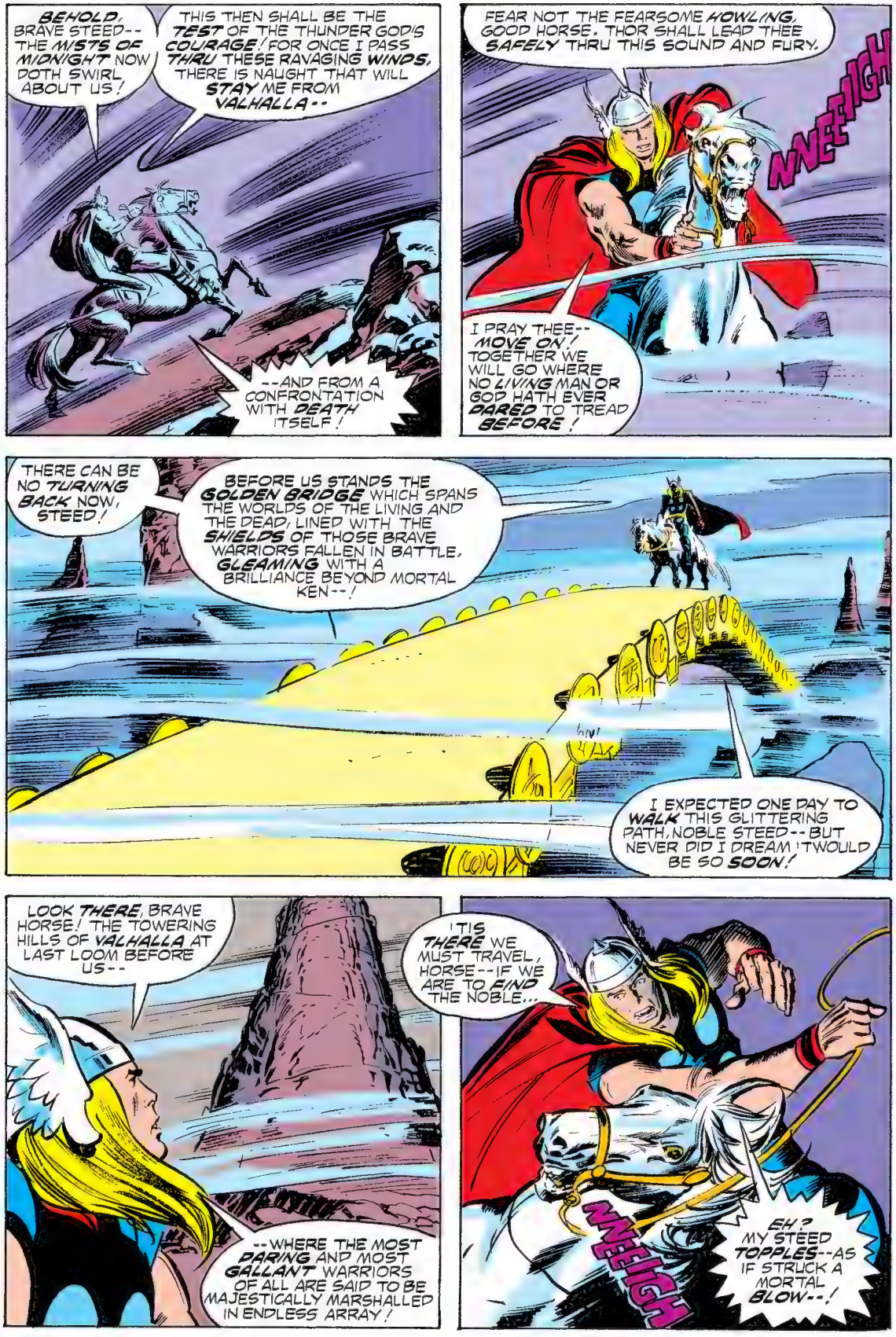
'TIS THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MY MOST NOBLE FATHER THAT DISTURBS ME, BELOVED. FOR IF ODIN HATH PERISHED, MUST THE REALM ETERNAL ITSELF NOT FOLLOW SOON AFTER?
BUT ALL IS NOT YET LOST, MY PRINCE. EVEN NOW, THE WISE VIZIER DOTH SEEK THY SIRE'S WHERE-ABOUTS!


THEN LET US HIE TO THE AGED ONE'S CHAMBERS, MY LADY, THAT WE MIGHT LEARN WHAT HE HATH FOUND--
--IF, IN TRUTH, THERE IS ANYTHING TO BE FOUND!


MILORD THOR! KARNILLA AND I HAVE BEEN AWAITING THEE. HAST THOU FINISHED THY MEDITATION?
AYE, BRAVE BALDER--BUT MY MIND RESTS NOT EASIER FOR IT!

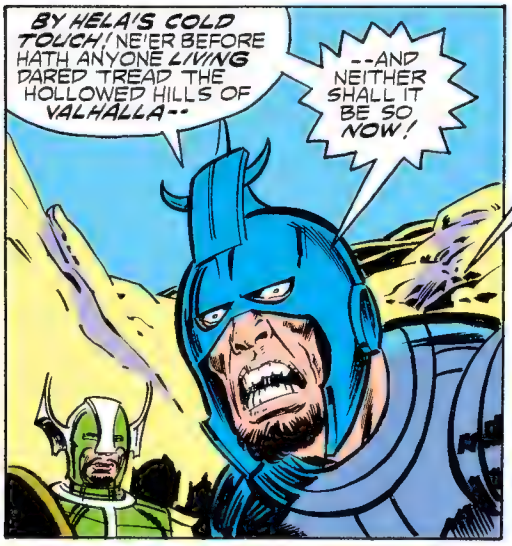
HAST THOU LOCATED THE ALL-FATHER YET, VIZIER?
FOR DAYS NOW, THUNDER GOD, I HAVE STUDIED THE STARS, AND SOUGHT IN DARK SHADOWS FOR THE ANSWER THOU DOST DESPERATELY SEEK--!
AND....?
AND I FEAR I HAVE DISCOVERED NAUGHT, MILORD UPON ALL THE MANY SPHERES AND PLANETS KNOWN TO THOSE OF IMMORTAL ASGARD--
--NO TRACE CAN THERE BE FOUND OF ALMIGHTY ODIN!
NOT A TRACE? THEN DOST THOU THINK--? COULD IT BE--?
IS THE NOBLE ODIN TRULY... DEAD?
THOUGH MY VERY SOUL DOTH SHRIVEL WITHIN ME AT THE THOUGHT, MY PRINCE... AYE, 'TIS POSSIBLE!
BUT WHO MAY SAY FOR CERTAIN, WHEN EVEN MINE OWN ARCANE POWERS CANNOT PIERCE THE VEIL THAT HIDES VALHALLA--
--THE DREADED DIMENSION OF DEATH!
THEN, VERILY, I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO GO TO THAT DARK DOMAIN--
--AND LEARN THE ANSWER FOR MYSELF!
NAY, MY LOVE-- THOU SPEAKEST MADNESS!
'TIS TRUE, THOR. OFTEN HATH THE DEATH-GODDESS HELA SOUGHT TO CLAIM THEE! WHY OFFER THYSELF TO HER NOW?
IF THE ALL-FATHER TRULY BE SLAIN, MILORD-- THY PEOPLE SHALL HAVE ALL THE MORE NEED OF THEE!
NOT TO MENTION THY LOVING LADY SIF!
I HAVE NO CHOICE, MY FRIENDS! THOR IS NAUGHT IF NOT HIS FATHER'S SON...
...AND A PRINCE MAY NOT SHIRK HIS APPOINTED DUTY!
IT IS A SAD-EYED ASSEMBLAGE THAT GATHERS TO BID THE THUNDER GOD FAREWELL...
MERELY SAY THE WORD, FRIEND THOR-- AND THE MIGHTY SWORD OF VOLSTAGG IS THINE TO COMMAND!
SO SAY WE ALL, MIGHTY ONE!
THE LIVES OF DASHING FANDRAL AND GRIM HOGUN ARE DEVOTED TO THY SERVICE!

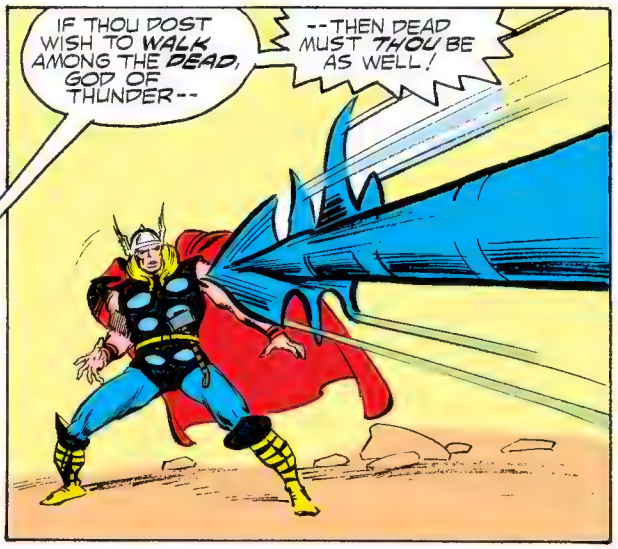

AS EVER, THY LOYALTY TOUCHES MY HEART, FRIEND FANDRAL--BUT THIS BE A TASK FOR MYSELF ALONE!
THE REALM ETERNAL SHALL REQUIRE MEN OF THY DEVOTION SHOULD I FAIL TO RETURN FROM MY QUEST!
THEN GO IN GLORY, THUNDER GOD--
--AND KNOW THAT THE FIGHTING HEARTS OF THY FRIENDS GO WITH THEE!
AS DOTH THE BROKEN HEART OF SIF, MILORD.
I SHALL TRY, MILADY!
IF THERE DOTH BE ANY JUSTICE--ANY MERCY--IN THIS COLD UNIVERSE, THOU SHALT RETURN TO ME!
THOU MUST RETURN TO ME!
BY ALL THE GODS--I SHALL TRY!
I CHARGE THEE, MY FRIENDS--PROTECT THE REALM ETERNAL WHILE I AM GONE!
NE'ER BEFORE IN ALL ITS GOLDEN YEARS HATH IT BEEN SO VULNERABLE AS NOW!
THY WISH IS OUR COMMAND, NOBLE ONE!
THEN ONLY ONE BOON MORE DO I ASK OF THEE IN MY ABSENCE...
...I BID YE, PRAY FOR ME!
THEN, WITH A SOLEMN PLEDGE UPON HIS LIPS, THE GOD OF THUNDER RIDES OUT OF THE GOLDEN CITY--AND INTO THE MOUNTAIN MISTS!
VERILY, THE JOURNEY TO VALHALLA BE A TREACHEROUS ONE--
--BUT 'TIS A JOURNEY THAT MUST BE TAKEN IF OMNIPOTENT ODIN IS TO BE FOUND!
INDEED, I WOULD RIDE WILLINGLY INTO THE FIERY JAWS OF FAFNIR THE DRAGON IF IT WOULD LEAD ME TO THE ONE I SEEK!
FOR 'TIS A FORCE FAR STRONGER THAN DUTY THAT DOTH URGE ME EVER ONWARD--
--'TIS THE ALL-ABIDING LOVE OF A FAITHFUL SON FOR HIS NOBLE FATHER!


BEHOLD, BRAVE STEED-- THE MISTS OF MIDNIGHT NOW DOTH SWIRL ABOUT US!
THIS THEN SHALL BE THE TEST OF THE THUNDER GOD'S COURAGE! FOR ONCE I PASS THRU THESE RAVAGING WINDS, THERE IS NAUGHT THAT WILL STAY ME FROM VALHALLA--
--AND FROM A CONFRONTATION WITH DEATH ITSELF!
FEAR NOT THE FEARSOME HOWLING, GOOD HORSE. THOR SHALL LEAD THEE SAFELY THRU THIS SOUND AND FURY.
NNEEIGH
I PRAY THEE-- MOVE ON! TOGETHER WE WILL GO WHERE NO LIVING MAN OR GOD HATH EVER DARED TO TREAD BEFORE!
THERE CAN BE NO TURNING BACK NOW, STEED!
BEFORE US STANDS THE GOLDEN BRIDGE WHICH SPANS THE WORLDS OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD, LINED WITH THE SHIELDS OF THOSE BRAVE WARRIORS FALLEN IN BATTLE, GLEAMING WITH A BRILLIANCE BEYOND MORTAL KEN--!
I EXPECTED ONE DAY TO WALK THIS GLITTERING PATH, NOBLE STEED-- BUT NEVER DID I DREAM 'TWOULD BE SO SOON!
LOOK THERE, BRAVE HORSE! THE TOWERING HILLS OF VALHALLA AT LAST LOOM BEFORE US--
--WHERE THE MOST DARING AND MOST GALLANT WARRIORS OF ALL ARE SAID TO BE MAJESTICALLY MARSHALLED IN ENDLESS ARRAY!
'TIS THERE WE MUST TRAVEL, HORSE--IF WE ARE TO FIND THE NOBLE...
NNEEIGH
EH? MY STEED TOPPLES--AS IF STRUCK A MORTAL BLOW--!

VERILY, IT DOTH SEEM THE ALL-CONSUMING FEAR WAS TOO MUCH FOR THIS VALIANT BEAST'S STOUT HEART TO ENDURE!
REST THEE WELL, THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL STEED. THOU HAST NAUGHT BUT VERDANT PASTURES BEFORE THEE. NOW...
...AND THOU SHALT BE REMEMBERED!
IT REMAINS FOR THOR ALONE NOW TO CONTINUE THE QUEST FOR ODIN--
--AND TRULY DO I SWEAR THAT NOT EVEN DEATH SHALL STOP ME!
STILL THE SAME SOUR-HUMORED THUNDER GOD, AY? ONE WOULD THINK THE JOURNEY TO VALHALLA SHOULD HAVE RELEASED THEE FROM ALL THY WORLDLY WOES!
ODIN'S BLOOD! THOU ART...
I AM HAROKIN THE BARBARIAN, THY ONCE-AND-FORMER FOE*--
--AND GLADLY DO I WELCOME THEE TO THIS BOLD COMPANY, ASGARDIAN!
SOOTH, BUT WE SHALL FIGHT BATTLES BOTH WILD AND WONDERFUL NOW THAT THOU HAST JOINED US!
THOU ART SADLY MISTAKEN, HAROKIN! THOR HATH NOT COME HENCE TO JOUST WITH THEE!
THEN FOR WHAT OTHER PURPOSE DOTH A WARRIOR ENTER THE DIMENSION OF DEATH--IF NOT TO JOIN THE BROTHERHOOD OF BATTLE?
*AS WITNESSED BACK IN THOR #129-133.--LEN.

PRITHEE, THUNDER GOD--ACCEPT THY FATE!
THOU DIDST LIVE THY LIFE MOST NOBLY--AND THOU CANST LIVE THY DEATH WITH EQUAL VIGOR!
BUT I BE NOT DEAD, BARBARIAN! I HAVE MERELY COME TO THIS DARK DOMAIN TO SEEK OUT OMNIPOTENT ODIN--
--AND LEARN WHETHER OR NOT HE HATH BEEN SLAIN!


BY HELA'S COLD TOUCH! NE'ER BEFORE HATH ANYONE LIVING DARED TREAD THE HOLLOWED HILLS OF VALHALLA--
--AND NEITHER SHALL IT BE SO NOW!


IF THOU DOST WISH TO WALK AMONG THE DEAD, GOD OF THUNDER--
--THEN DEAD MUST THOU BE AS WELL!

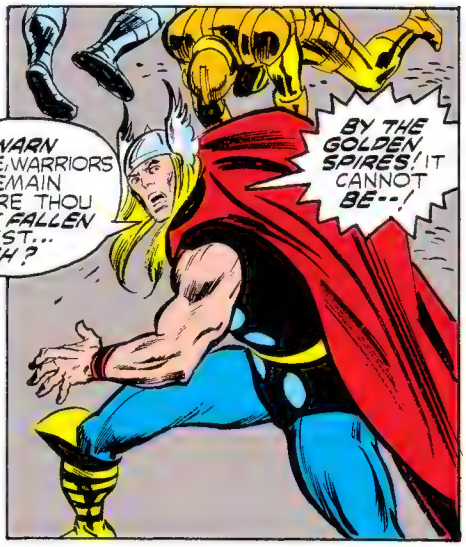
NEVER!
KRAK!
LIVING DID I ENTER THIS COLD KINGDOM, AND LIVING SHALL I DEPART--
--AND NONE MAY SAY ME NAY!

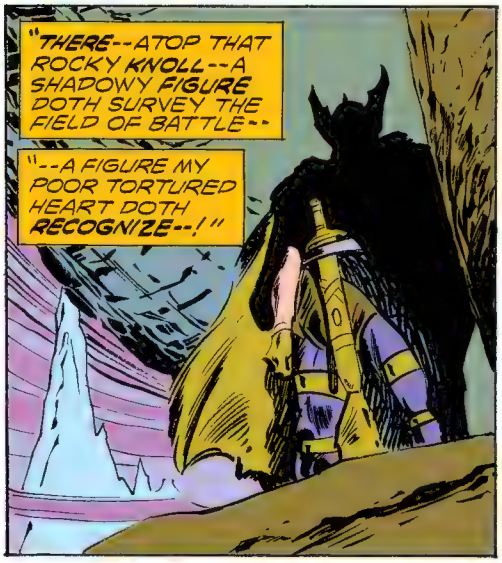
SO! THE CHALLENGE HATH BEEN SPOKEN! THE GAUNTLET HATH BEEN HURLED!
AND THE BATTLE MOST GLORIOUS IS BEGUN AT LAST!

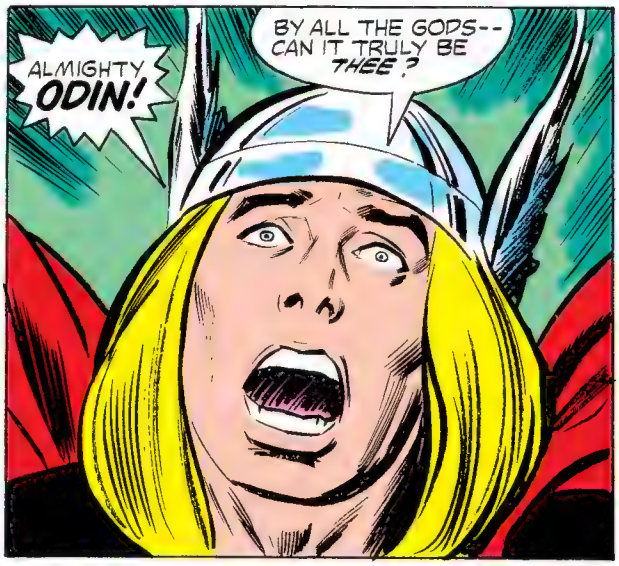
DESPITE MY WARNING, THOU DOST STILL DARE TO ATTACK ME, WITHOUT QUALM, WITHOUT MERCY?
THEN, BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF ODIN-- SO BE IT!!
CHOOM!
IF 'TIS UNRELENTING COMBAT YE DO SEEK, MAD WARRIORS--
--YE SHALL FIND FAR MORE THAN THOU HADST BARGAINED FOR!
AYE, THAT'S THE SPIRIT, THUNDER GOD! FORGET THINE INHIBITIONS! LET THE BATTLE-FRENZY TAKE THEE!
WIELD THY WEAPON PROUDLY--FOR NOW TRULY ART THOU ONE OF US!
NAY, HAROKIN-- NOT SO LONG AS MY LIEGE AND MY LAND FACE MORTAL PERIL!
FOR THINE OWN SAKE, HAROKIN--ORDER THY WARRIORS TO LAY DOWN THEIR ARMS, ERE THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR BE FORCED TO WREAK FURTHER HAVOC IN THEIR RANKS!

SURRENDER, THUNDER GOD? I THINK NOT!
RATHER WE SHALL BATTLE ALL THE MORE FIERCELY--
FOOL!
--UNTIL THOU DOST FINALLY DEIGN TO JOIN US!
WHILE WE CONTINUE THIS SENSELESS COMBAT, THE REALM ETERNAL DOTH TOTTER ON THE VERY BRINK OF DESPAIR--
--FOR WANT OF ITS RIGHTFUL LORD AND MASTER!

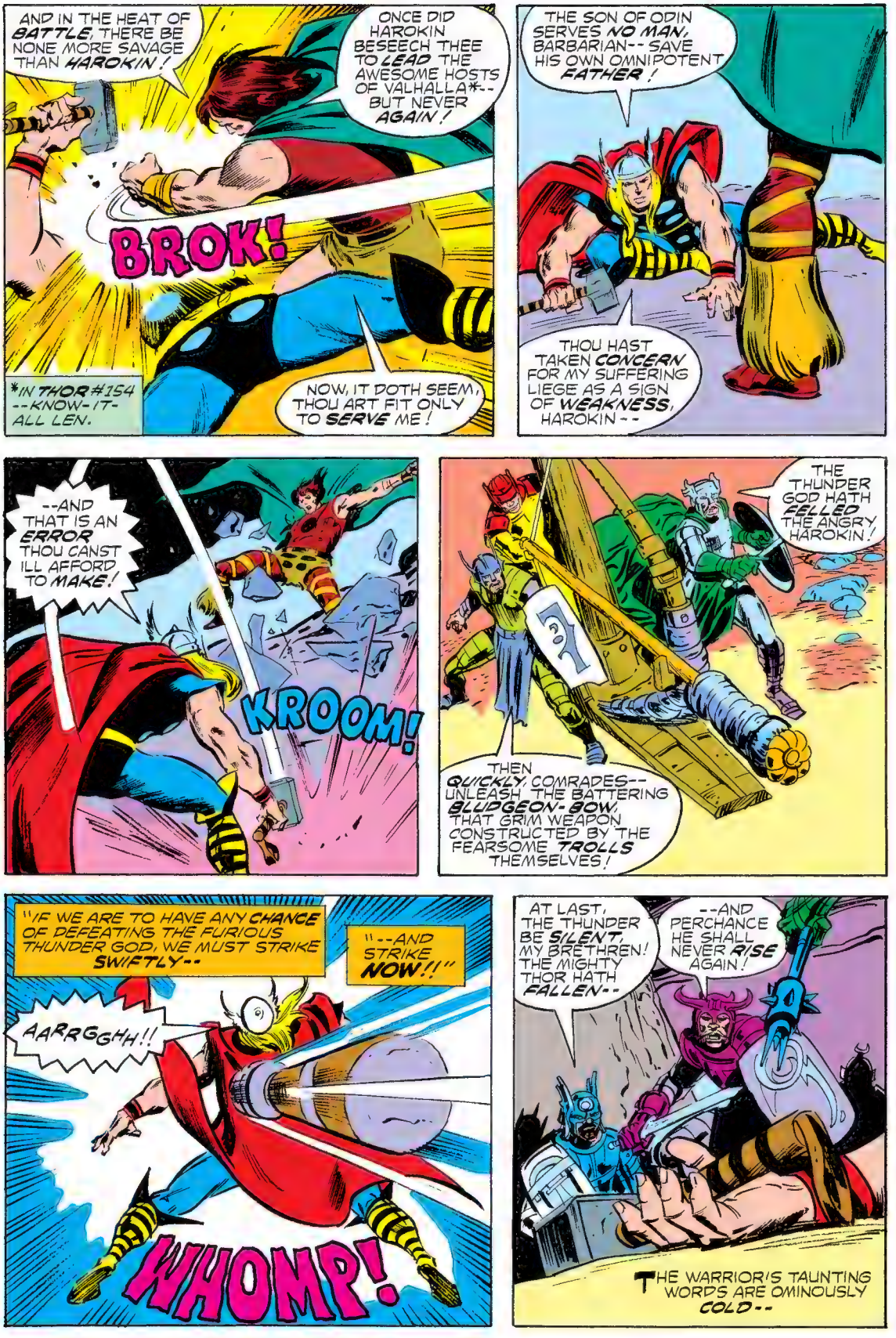
BUT THOR HATH SWORN TO FIND THE MISSING ALL-FATHER--
--AND NOTHING SHALL MAKE ME BREAK MY SOLEMN VOW!

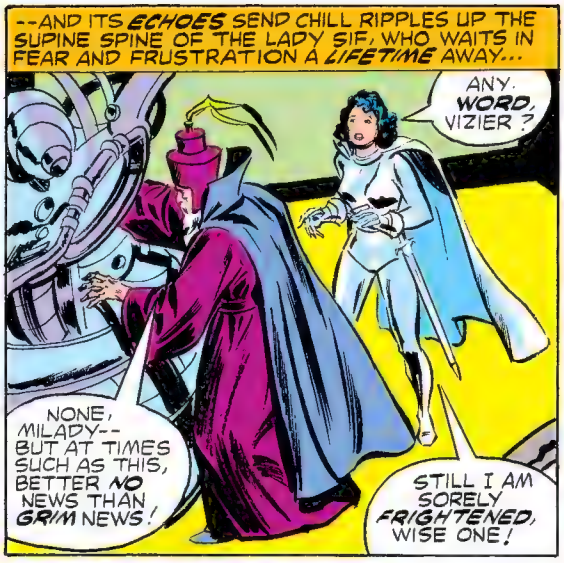

I WARN THEE, WARRIORS --REMAIN WHERE THOU HAST FALLEN LEST... EH?
BY THE GOLDEN SPIRES! IT CANNOT BE--!


"THERE--ATOP THAT ROCKY KNOLL--A SHADOWY FIGURE DOTH SURVEY THE FIELD OF BATTLE--
"--A FIGURE MY POOR TORTURED HEART DOTH RECOGNIZE--!"


ALMIGHTY ODIN!
BY ALL THE GODS-- CAN IT TRULY BE THEE?

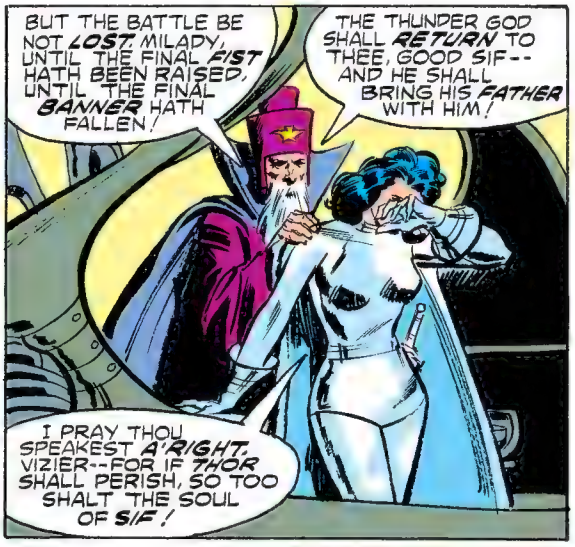
BUT ERE THE GOD OF THUNDER CAN LEARN THE ANSWER TO THAT ALL-IMPORTANT QUESTION, WE MUST RETURN FOR A MOMENT TO THE PALACE IMPERIAL OF GOLDEN ASGARD--
--WHERE OTHER QUESTIONS ARE CRYING TO BE ASKED...
DOST THOU THINK THERE BE ANY HOPE FOR THE VALIANT THOR'S SURVIVAL, KARNILLA?
WHERE THERE BE LIFE, BALDER--THERE WILL ALWAYS BE ROOM FOR HOPE!
WE'VE NO RECOURSE BUT TO WAIT AND SEE!
YET WAITING CAN OFTIMES BE THE MOST TERRIBLE TASK OF ALL, NORN QUEEN.
THIS DO I KNOW, BRAVE BALDER... ALL TOO WELL.
VERILY, THE REALM ETERNAL OWE THEE THANKS, FOR AIDING US IN BATTLE 'GAINST THE MONSTROUS MANGOG*--BUT THY WORK HERE IS DONE, KARNILLA!
WHY DOST THOU REMAIN?
*THESE THREE ISSUES PAST.--LEN.
THE QUEEN OF THE NORNS NEEDS EXPLAIN HERSELF TO NO ONE, ASGARDIAN! THOU WOULDST DO WELL TO REMEMBER THAT!
IN TRUTH, WITCH-WOMAN, I SAY THEE...
STILL, ART THOU TRULY THAT ANXIOUS FOR KARNILLA TO TAKE HER LEAVE?
...NAY!
WHILE, BACK IN VALHALLA...
WHY DOST THOU STAND THUS MOTIONLESS, MY LIEGE? DOST THOU NOT RECOGNIZE ME?
'TIS THOR, THY MOST DEVOTED SON! I HAVE COME TO TAKE THEE AWAY FROM THIS CRUEL AND CURSED LAND!
I HAVE COME TO TAKE THEE... HOME!
NAY, THUNDER GOD!
THOU SHALT DO NOTHING OF THE KIND--
--NOT SO LONG AS MIGHTY HAROKIN DOTH STAND TO OPPOSE THEE!
ERE THOU CANST HOPE TO LEAVE VALHALLA, THOU MUST EARN THE RIGHT--
THRAK!
--IN SAVAGE COMBAT!

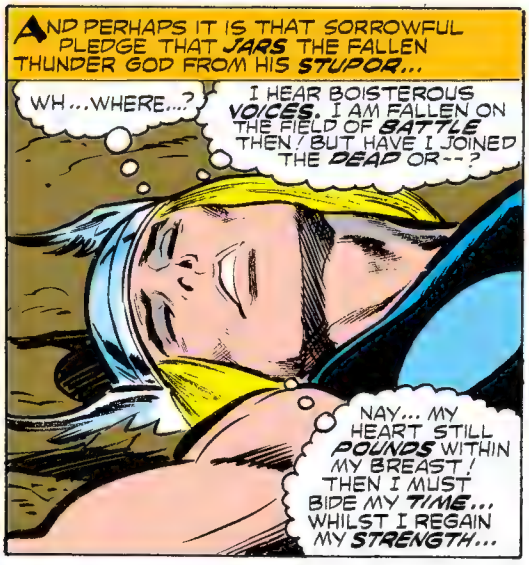

AND IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE, THERE BE NONE MORE SAVAGE THAN HAROKIN!
ONCE DID HAROKIN BESEECH THEE TO LEAD THE AWESOME HOSTS OF VALHALLA*-- BUT NEVER AGAIN!
BROK!
*IN THOR #154 --KNOW-IT-ALL LEN.
NOW, IT DOTH SEEM, THOU ART FIT ONLY TO SERVE ME!
THE SON OF ODIN SERVES NO MAN, BARBARIAN-- SAVE HIS OWN OMNIPOTENT FATHER!
THOU HAST TAKEN CONCERN FOR MY SUFFERING LIEGE AS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS, HAROKIN--
--AND THAT IS AN ERROR THOU CANST ILL AFFORD TO MAKE!
KROOM!
THE THUNDER GOD HATH FELLED THE ANGRY HAROKIN!
THEN QUICKLY, COMRADES-- UNLEASH THE BATTERING BLUDGEON-BOW, THAT GRIM WEAPON CONSTRUCTED BY THE FEARSOME TROLLS THEMSELVES!
"IF WE ARE TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF DEFEATING THE FURIOUS THUNDER GOD, WE MUST STRIKE SWIFTLY--
"--AND STRIKE NOW!!"
AARRGGHH!!
WHOMP!
AT LAST, THE THUNDER BE SILENT, MY BRETHREN! THE MIGHTY THOR HATH FALLEN--
--AND PERCHANCE HE SHALL NEVER RISE AGAIN!
THE WARRIOR'S TAUNTING WORDS ARE OMINOUSLY COLD--

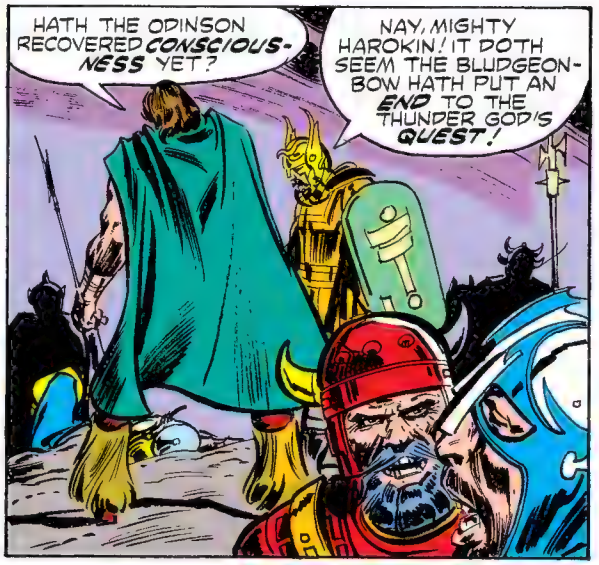

--AND ITS ECHOES SEND CHILL RIPPLES UP THE SUPINE SPINE OF THE LADY SIF, WHO WAITS IN FEAR AND FRUSTRATION A LIFETIME AWAY...
ANY WORD, VIZIER?
NONE, MILADY-- BUT AT TIMES SUCH AS THIS, BETTER NO NEWS THAN GRIM NEWS!
STILL I AM SORELY FRIGHTENED, WISE ONE!

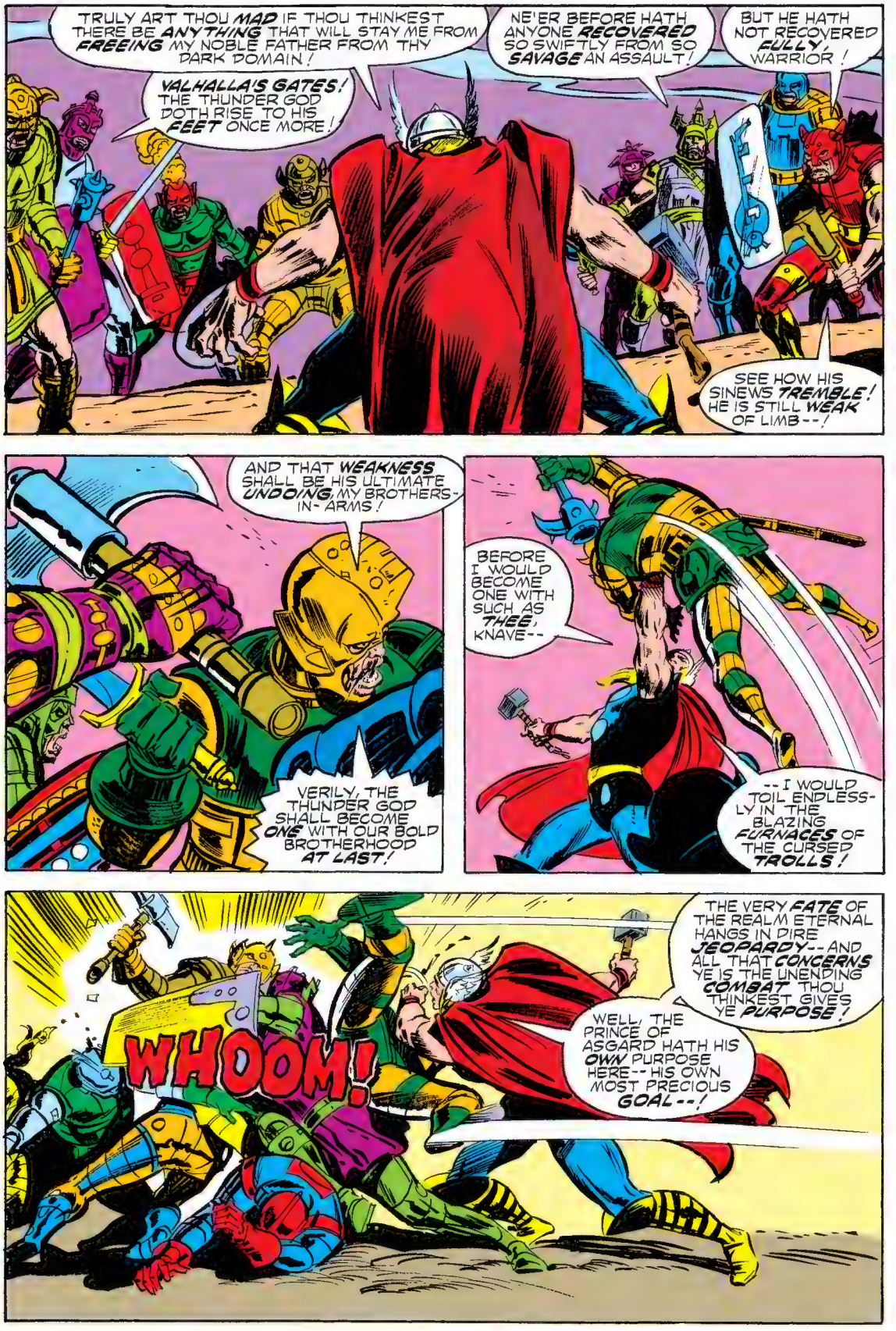
THERE BE NO NEED, FAIR SIF-- FOR OF ALL THE MANY GODS OF THE REALM ETERNAL, THERE BE NONE MORE POWERFUL THAN THE GOD OF THUNDER!
MANY TIMES HATH DARK HELA COVETED THE LIFE OF THOR-- AND ALWAYS HATH SHE FAILED TO SECURE IT!
THUS I SAY THEE, YOUNG GODDESS-- BE OF BRAVE HEART!

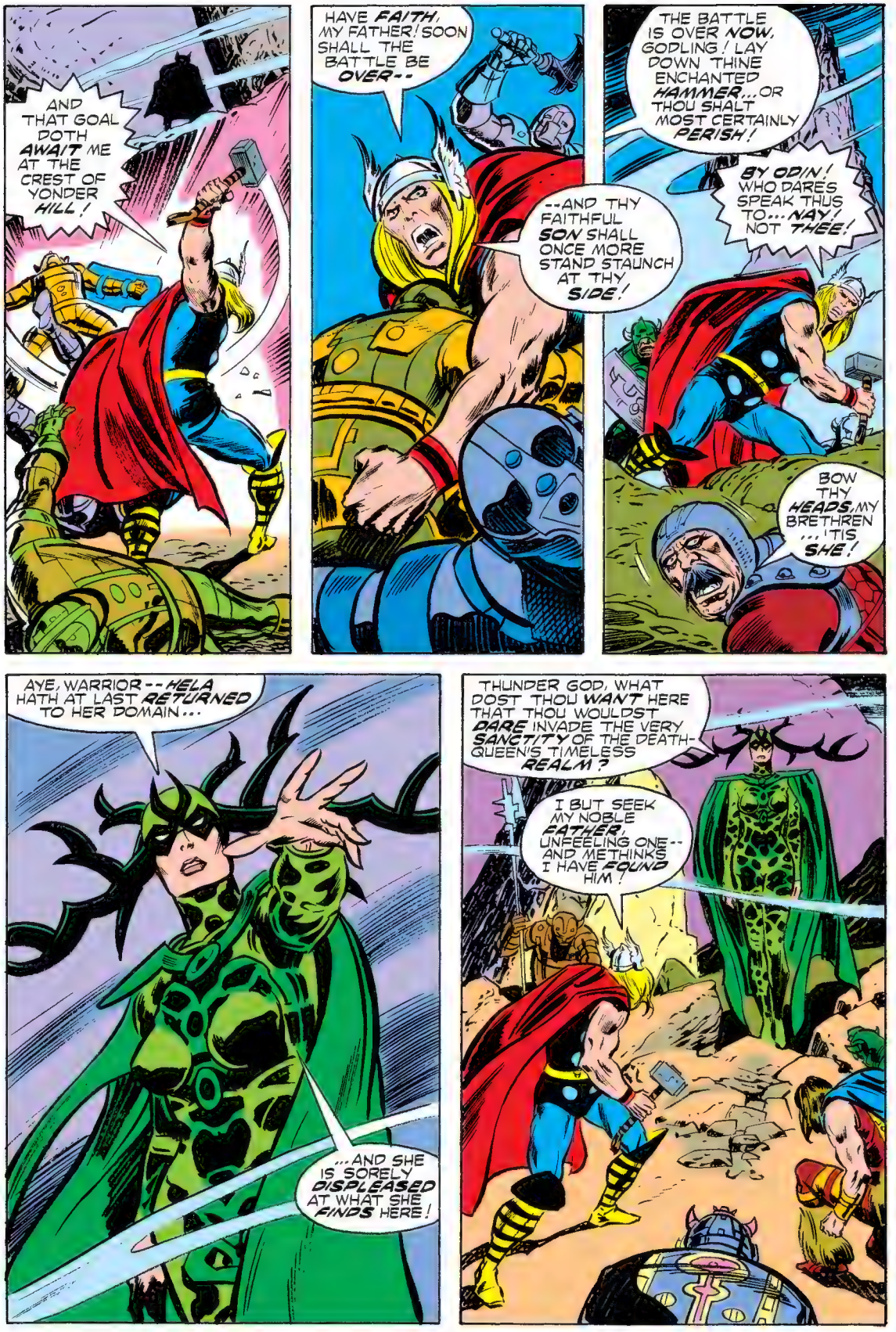
MERE WORDS CANNOT COMFORT ME NOW, OLD ONE!
TOO OFTEN BEFORE HAVE I LOST MY BELOVED--TO THE MORTAL JANE FOSTER--TO THE CLARION CALL OF BATTLE-- BUT EVER HATH HE RETURNED TO ME!
IF I LOSE HIM NOW TO DEATH, VIZIER--THEN I LOSE MY LOVE FOREVER!


BUT THE BATTLE BE NOT LOST, MILADY, UNTIL THE FINAL FIST HATH BEEN RAISED, UNTIL THE FINAL BANNER HATH FALLEN!
THE THUNDER GOD SHALL RETURN TO THEE, GOOD SIF-- AND HE SHALL BRING HIS FATHER WITH HIM!
I PRAY THOU SPEAKEST A'RIGHT, VIZIER--FOR IF THOR SHALL PERISH, SO TOO SHALT THE SOUL OF SIF!

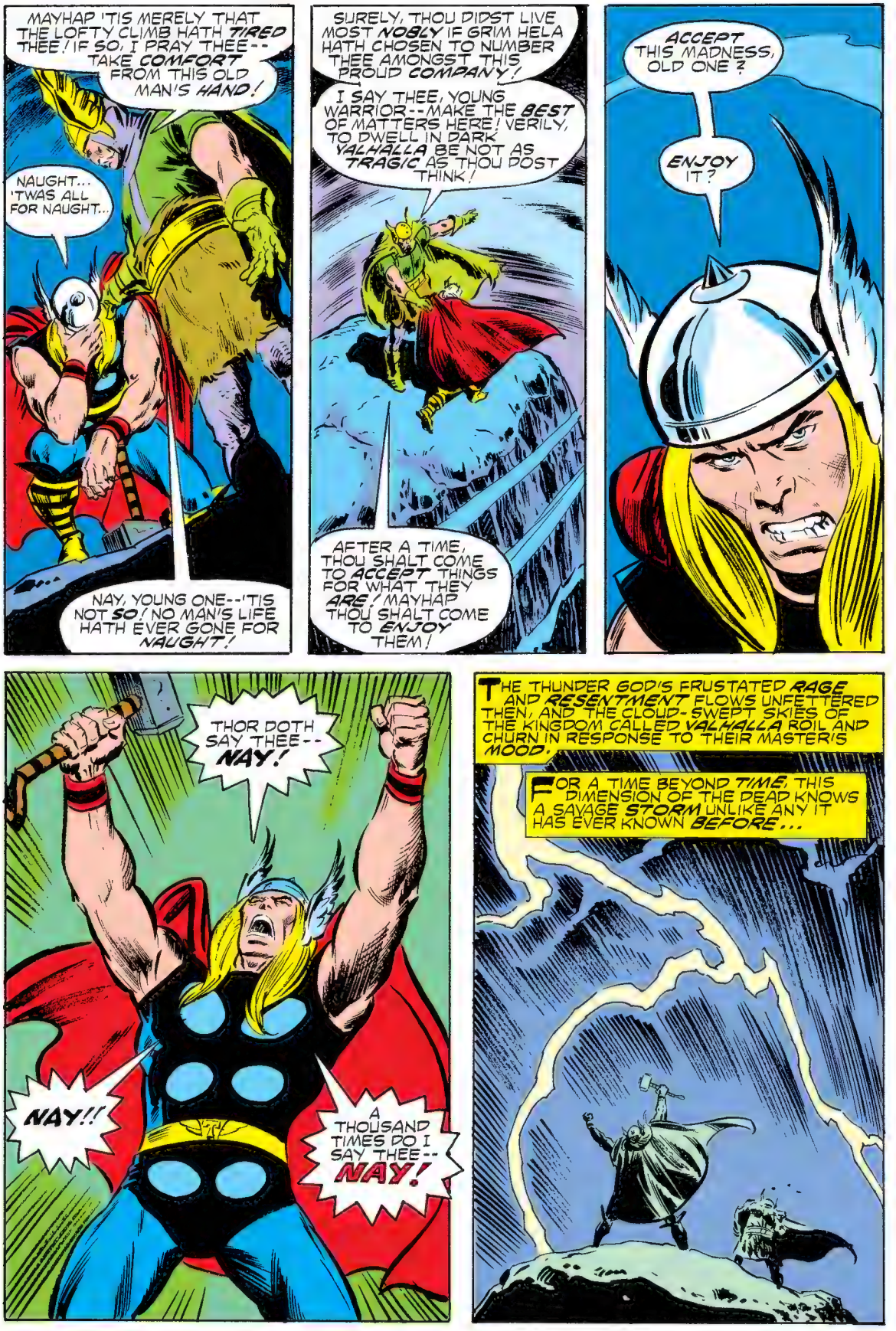

AND PERHAPS IT IS THAT SORROWFUL PLEDGE THAT JARS THE FALLEN THUNDER GOD FROM HIS STUPOR...
WH...WHERE...?
I HEAR BOISTEROUS VOICES. I AM FALLEN ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE THEN! BUT HAVE I JOINED THE DEAD OR--?
NAY... MY HEART STILL POUNDS WITHIN MY BREAST! THEN I MUST BIDE MY TIME... WHILST I REGAIN MY STRENGTH...


HATH THE ODINSON RECOVERED CONSCIOUSNESS YET?
NAY, MIGHTY HAROKIN! IT DOTH SEEM THE BLUDGEON-BOW HATH PUT AN END TO THE THUNDER GOD'S QUEST!


TRULY ART THOU MAD IF THOU THINKEST THERE BE ANYTHING THAT WILL STAY ME FROM FREEING MY NOBLE FATHER FROM THY DARK DOMAIN!
VALHALLA'S GATES! THE THUNDER GOD DOTH RISE TO HIS FEET ONCE MORE!
NE'ER BEFORE HATH ANYONE RECOVERED SO SWIFTLY FROM SO SAVAGE AN ASSAULT!
BUT HE HATH NOT RECOVERED FULLY, WARRIOR!
SEE HOW HIS SINEWS TREMBLE! HE IS STILL WEAK OF LIMB--!
AND THAT WEAKNESS SHALL BE HIS ULTIMATE UNDOING, MY BROTHERS-IN-ARMS!
VERILY, THE THUNDER GOD SHALL BECOME ONE WITH OUR BOLD BROTHERHOOD AT LAST!
BEFORE I WOULD BECOME ONE WITH SUCH AS THEE, KNAVE--
--I WOULD TOIL ENDLESSLY IN THE BLAZING FURNACES OF THE CURSED TROLLS!
WHOOM!
THE VERY FATE OF THE REALM ETERNAL HANGS IN DIRE JEOPARDY--AND ALL THAT CONCERNS YE IS THE UNENDING COMBAT THOU THINKEST GIVES YE PURPOSE!
WELL, THE PRINCE OF ASGARD HATH HIS OWN PURPOSE HERE--HIS OWN MOST PRECIOUS GOAL--!


AND THAT GOAL DOTH AWAIT ME AT THE CREST OF YONDER HILL!
HAVE FAITH, MY FATHER! SOON SHALL THE BATTLE BE OVER--
--AND THY FAITHFUL SON SHALL ONCE MORE STAND STAUNCH AT THY SIDE!
THE BATTLE IS OVER NOW, GODLING! LAY DOWN THINE ENCHANTED HAMMER... OR THOU SHALT MOST CERTAINLY PERISH!
BY ODIN! WHO DARES SPEAK THUS TO... NAY! NOT THEE!
BOW THY HEADS, MY BRETHREN ... 'TIS SHE!
AYE, WARRIOR -- HELA HATH AT LAST RETURNED TO HER DOMAIN...
...AND SHE IS SORELY DISPLEASED AT WHAT SHE FINDS HERE!
THUNDER GOD, WHAT DOST THOU WANT HERE THAT THOU WOULDST DARE INVADE THE VERY SANCTITY OF THE DEATH-QUEEN'S TIMELESS REALM?
I BUT SEEK MY NOBLE FATHER, UNFEELING ONE -- AND METHINKS I HAVE FOUND HIM!

THOU ART SADLY MISTAKEN, ASGARDIAN!
THE REGAL ODIN DOTH NOT DWELL AMONG THE LEGIONS OF THE LOST!
DARK GODDESS, THOR DOTH CALL THEE-- LIAR!
WITH MINE OWN EYES HAVE I SEEN THE ALL-FATHER STANDING SOLEMN AND STILL ATOP YON LOFTY SPIRE!
THOU HAST SEEN NAUGHT BUT THAT WHICH THOU DIDST WISH TO SEE, THUNDER GOD-- PHANTASMS -- MERE ILLUSIONS --
--BUT I SUPPOSE THAT BE SOMETHING THOU MUST LEARN FOR THYSELF!
AYE, GRIM ONE--
--AND NOT EVEN THY COLD AND FINAL TOUCH COULD NOW STAY ME FROM THE ONE I SEEK!
'TWILL BE A DAY OF GREAT REJOICING WHEN THE LORD MOST HIGH OF ETERNAL ASGARD DOTH RETURN TO HIS WAITING THRONE!
A DAY FOR LAUGHTER AND CHEERING AND FREE-FLOWING ALE--! VERILY, A DAY FOR...
NAY! IT-- IT CANNOT-- IT MUST NOT-- BE--!
WHAT IS IT, MY SON? WHY DOST THOU LOOK SO PALE?
SURELY THE SORRY VISAGE OF GRAY-HAIRED GROMBAR DOTH NOT CAUSE THEE SUCH DESPAIR!


MAYHAP 'TIS MERELY THAT THE LOFTY CLIMB HATH TIRED THEE! IF SO, I PRAY THEE-- TAKE COMFORT FROM THIS OLD MAN'S HAND!
NAUGHT... 'TWAS ALL FOR NAUGHT...
NAY, YOUNG ONE--'TIS NOT SO! NO MAN'S LIFE HATH EVER GONE FOR NAUGHT!
SURELY, THOU DIDST LIVE MOST NOBLY IF GRIM HELA HATH CHOSEN TO NUMBER THEE AMONGST THIS PROUD COMPANY!
I SAY THEE, YOUNG WARRIOR--MAKE THE BEST OF MATTERS HERE! VERILY, TO DWELL IN DARK VALHALLA BE NOT AS TRAGIC AS THOU DOST THINK!
AFTER A TIME, THOU SHALT COME TO ACCEPT THINGS FOR WHAT THEY ARE! MAYHAP THOU SHALT COME TO ENJOY THEM!
ACCEPT THIS MADNESS, OLD ONE?
ENJOY IT?
THOR DOTH SAY THEE-- NAY!
NAY!!
A THOUSAND TIMES DO I SAY THEE-- NAY!
THE THUNDER GOD'S FRUSTATED RAGE AND RESENTMENT FLOWS UNFETTERED THEN, AND THE CLOUD-SWEPT SKIES OF THE KINGDOM CALLED VALHALLA ROIL AND CHURN IN RESPONSE TO THEIR MASTER'S MOOD.
FOR A TIME BEYOND TIME, THIS DIMENSION OF THE DEAD KNOWS A SAVAGE STORM UNLIKE ANY IT HAS EVER KNOWN BEFORE...

THEN AT LAST, HIS FURY EXHAUSTED, THE GOD OF THUNDER COMES DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN--
--HIS NOBLE HEAD BOWED BENEATH A BURDEN ALMOST TOO GREAT FOR EVEN A GOD TO BEAR.
ART THOU FINALLY SATISFIED, ASGARDIAN?
THY PARDON, DEATH-QUEEN! I SHALL TROUBLE THEE NO LONGER!
THEN FARE THEE WELL, ODINSON... UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN!
THOU DOST PERMIT THE THUNDER GOD TO LEAVE, MISTRESS-- WHEN, WITH BUT A TOUCH OF THY COLD HAND, HE WOULD BE THINE FOREVER?
AYE, HAROKIN-- HE IS FREE TO CONTINUE HIS QUEST FOR HIS MISSING FATHER!
WHEN THE GODDESS OF DEATH DOTH COME AT LAST TO CLAIM THE MIGHTY THOR, 'TWILL BE ON HER TERMS--
--AND IN HER OWN GOOD TIME!
THOU ART BEING UNSEEMLY MERCIFUL, GRIM ONE.
MERCIFUL, BARBARIAN? NAY, I THINK NOT. 'TWOULD BE FAR MORE COMPASSIONATE FOR ME TO SLAY THE ASGARDIAN NOW--
--RATHER THAN LET HIM GO FORTH TO FACE THE UNIMAGINABLE TORMENTS THAT AWAIT HIM WHEN HE RETURNS TO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING!

NEXT ISSUE • THE QUEST FOR ODIN MOVES INTO HIGH GEAR, AS THE MIGHTY THOR BATTLES **ULIK, THE TERROR OF THE TROLLS!** BE HERE FOR...

"A DRAGON AT THE GATES!"

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THE MIGHTY
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TAKE YOUR CHOICE, THUNDER GOD-- DEATH BY FIRE..
--OR DEATH AT THE HAND OF ULIK, THE MOST SAVAGE TROLL OF ALL!!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

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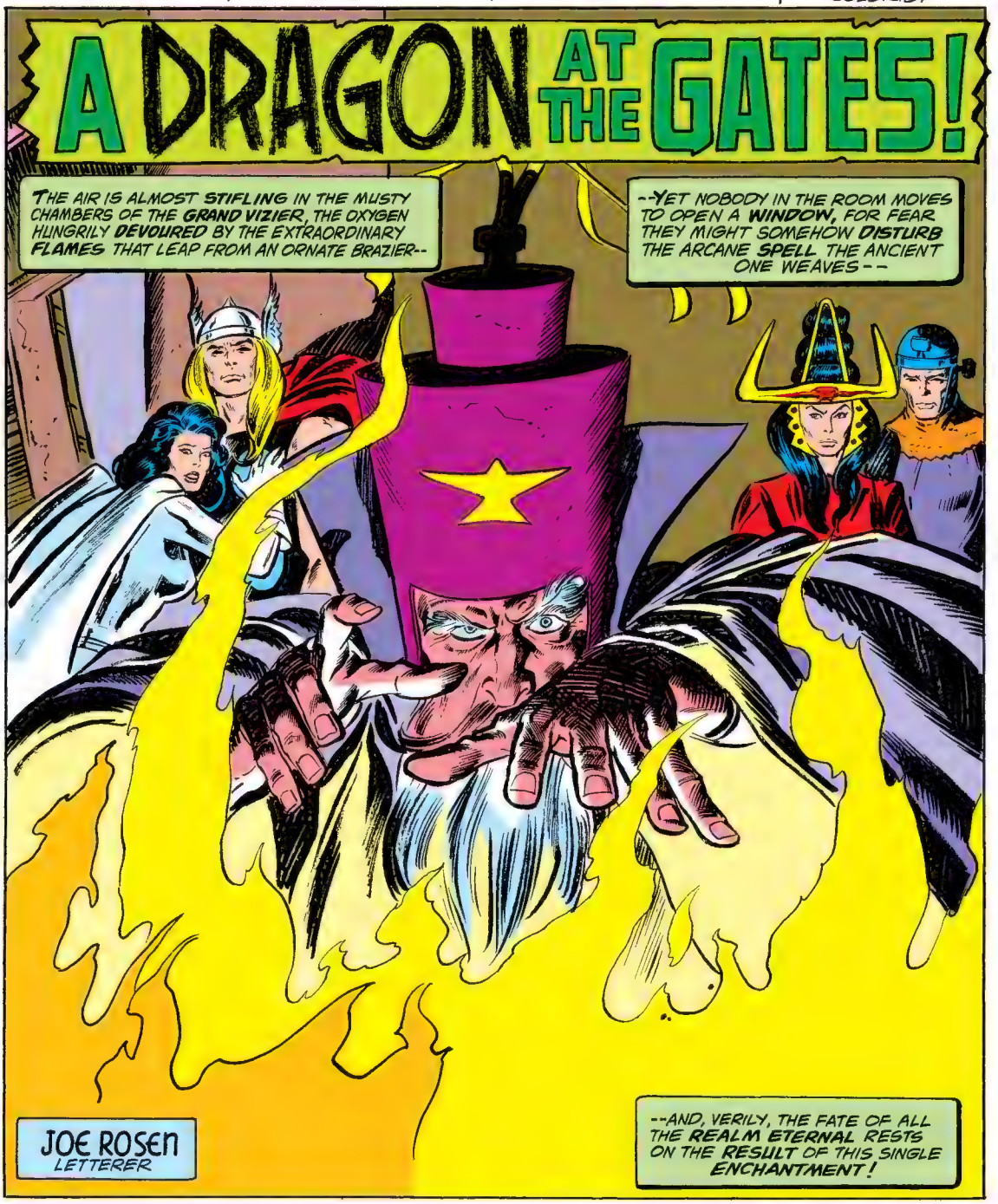
A DRAGON AT THE GATES!


THE AIR IS ALMOST STIFLING IN THE MUSTY CHAMBERS OF THE GRAND VIZIER, THE OXYGEN HUNGRILY DEVOURED BY THE EXTRAORDINARY FLAMES THAT LEAP FROM AN ORNATE BRAZIER--
--YET NOBODY IN THE ROOM MOVES TO OPEN A WINDOW, FOR FEAR THEY MIGHT SOMEHOW DISTURB THE ARCANE SPELL THE ANCIENT ONE WEAVES--
JOE ROSEN LETTERER
--AND, VERILY, THE FATE OF ALL THE REALM ETERNAL RESTS ON THE RESULT OF THIS SINGLE ENCHANTMENT!

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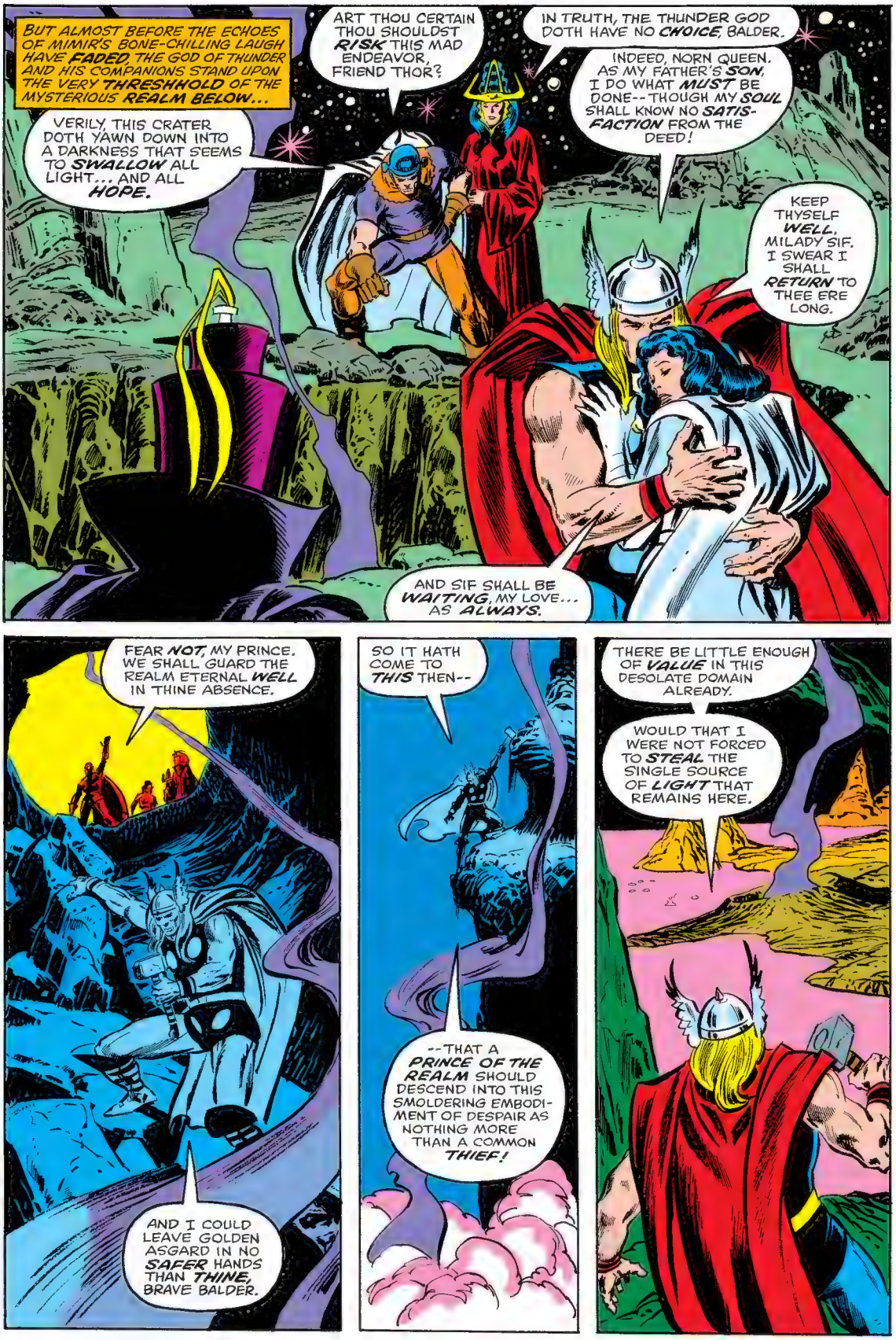
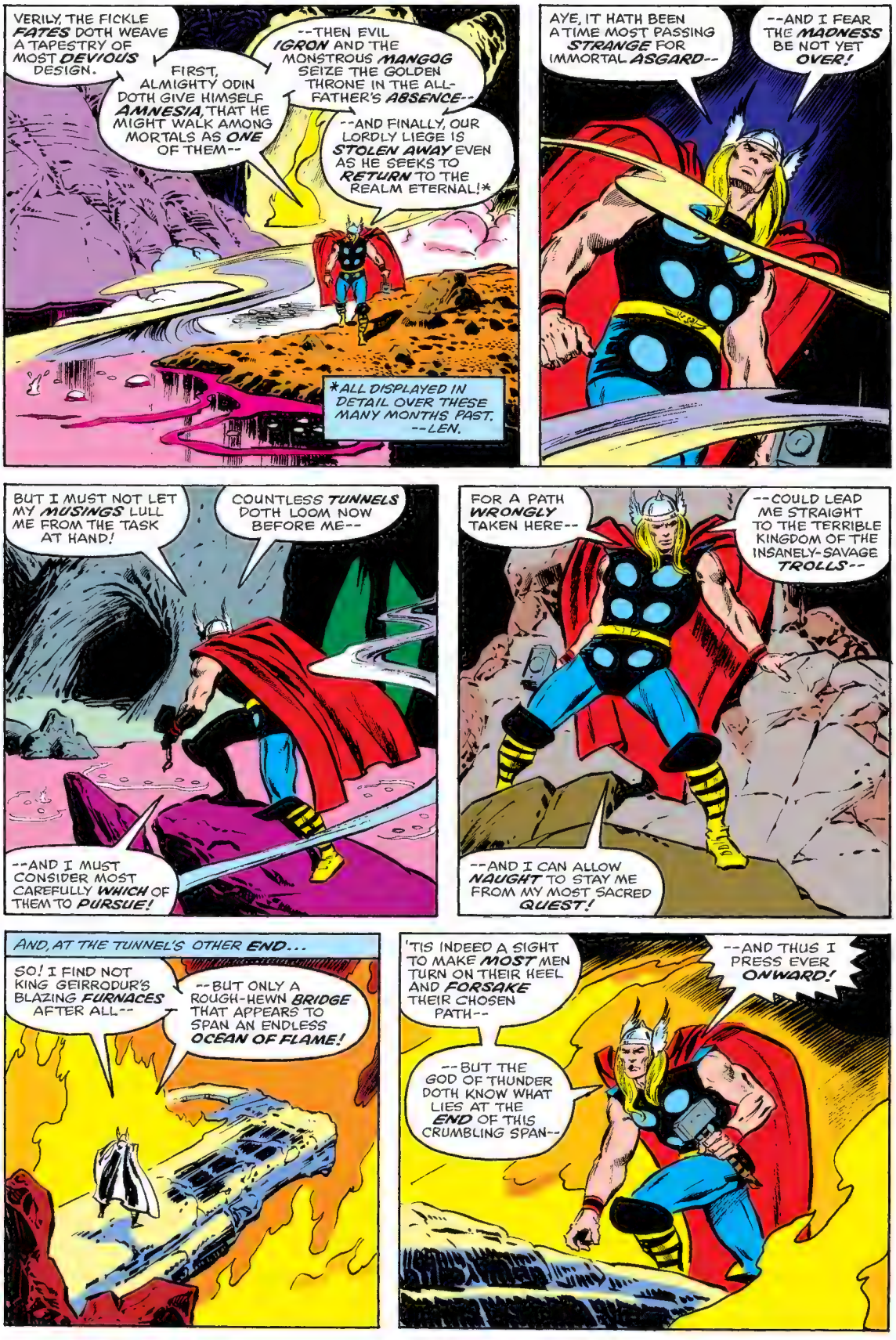
I PRAY THEE, MILORD THOR--BE THERE NO OTHER WAY TO LEARN THY FATHER'S WHERE-ABOUTS?
NAY, FAIR SIF. TO DARK VALHALLA ITSELF HAVE I GONE, IN SEARCH OF THE NOBLE ODIN*--
--BUT NARY A TRACE HAVE I FOUND OF HIM!
*LAST ISH, RIGHT? --LEN.
VERILY, IF WE MUST NOW DELVE INTO REALMS UNKNOWN FOR SOME SIGN OF OUR ALMIGHTY LIEGE--
--THEN SO BE IT!
BELOVED, PLEASE--!
THOU WOULDST DO WELL TO HEED THY LADY, THUNDER GOD.
KARNILLA SPEAKS TRUE, MY PRINCE. PRAY HAVE A CARE--LEST THOU SOMEHOW OFFEND FORCES BEYOND OUR KEN.
THY WORDS OF CAUTION ARE NOTED, BRAVE BALDER. BUT, FOR THE SAKE OF ALL ASGARD, STILL DO I SAY--CARRY ON, VIZIER!
ART THOU CERTAIN, ODINSON?
AYE, WISE ONE. WHATEVER THE OUT-COME, I SHALL HAVE NO REGRETS.
THEN, AT THY COMMAND, MILORD--I NOW DO SUMMON HE WHO ALONE MIGHT GRANT THEE THE KNOWLEDGE THOU DOST SO DESPERATELY SEEK!
ONCE AGAIN, THE AGED VIZIER TAKES UP THE ARCANE CHANT. HIS WORDS ARE SPOKEN IN LANGUAGES EVEN GODS HAVE LONG SINCE FORGOTTEN--
--BUT THEY ARE EFFECTIVE WORDS NONETHELESS!
WHO HATH SUMMONED FORTH THE GRIM GUARDIAN OF THE DARK WELL OF WISDOM?
WHO HATH SUMMONED MIMIR?

'TIS THOR, GOD OF THUNDER, PRINCE OF ASGARD, WHO HATH CALLED THEE HERE, ALL-WISE ONE--
--FOR REGAL ODIN, MONARCH MOST HIGH OF THE REALM ETERNAL, HATH SOMEHOW VANISHED FROM OUR MIDST--
--AND WE PRAY THAT THOU CANST TELL US WHERE TO FIND HIM!
WHAT? AGAIN??
ONCE BEFORE DIDST THOU CALL ON MIMIR TO SEEK THY MISSING FATHER, AND THEN DID MIMIR AID THEE*--
--FOR SUCH WAS MY DUTY TO THY SIRE.
*BACK IN THOR 240. --LEN.
BUT NO ONE MAY SEEK THE SAME KNOWLEDGE TWICE IN MIMIR'S NAME!
ERE I WOULD TELL THEE WHAT THOU DOST WISH TO KNOW, THUNDER GOD--I WOULD HAVE TRIBUTE PAID ME, AS BEFITS THE FOUNT OF KNOWLEDGE!
MERELY ASK IT, MIMIR--AND IT SHALL BE THINE!
THEN LOOK THEE INTO MY FLAMES, ODINSON--AND BEHOLD THE MIGHTY DRAGON THAT GUARDS THE GOLDEN GATES TO THE REALM BELOW!
FOR 'TIS ITS CYCLOPEAN RUBY EYE WHICH I DO DEMAND OF THEE!
NAY, WISE MIMIR! 'TIS NOT THOR'S WAY TO STEAL THAT WHICH DOTH NOT BELONG TO HIM, BUT...
...BUT...
...BUT FOR THE SAKE OF ODIN AND IMMORTAL ASGARD...
...THOR SHALL DO...WHATE'ER HE MUST.
INDEED THOU SHALT, THUNDER GOD.
AND THUS, I TRUST I SHALL NOT HEAR FROM THEE AGAIN!
HA HA HA HA HA

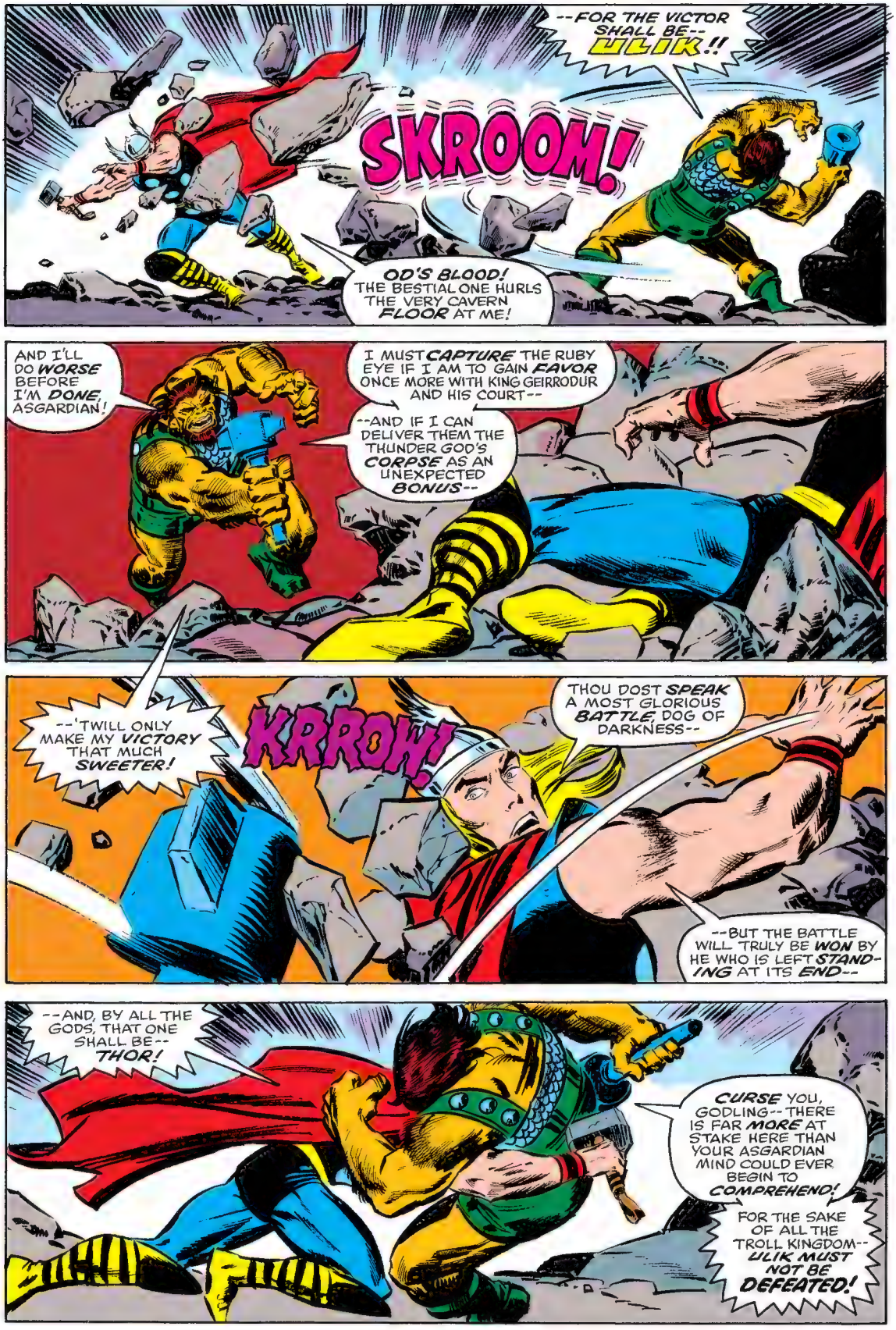

BUT ALMOST BEFORE THE ECHOES OF MIMIR'S BONE-CHILLING LAUGH HAVE FADED, THE GOD OF THUNDER AND HIS COMPANIONS STAND UPON THE VERY THRESHHOLD OF THE MYSTERIOUS REALM BELOW...
VERILY, THIS CRATER DOTH YAWN DOWN INTO A DARKNESS THAT SEEMS TO SWALLOW ALL LIGHT... AND ALL HOPE.
ART THOU CERTAIN THOU SHOULDST RISK THIS MAD ENDEAVOR, FRIEND THOR?
IN TRUTH, THE THUNDER GOD DOTH HAVE NO CHOICE, BALDER.
INDEED, NORN QUEEN. AS MY FATHER'S SON, I DO WHAT MUST BE DONE--THOUGH MY SOUL SHALL KNOW NO SATISFACTION FROM THE DEED!
KEEP THYSELF WELL, MILADY SIF. I SWEAR I SHALL RETURN TO THEE ERE LONG.
AND SIF SHALL BE WAITING, MY LOVE... AS ALWAYS.
FEAR NOT, MY PRINCE. WE SHALL GUARD THE REALM ETERNAL WELL IN THINE ABSENCE.
AND I COULD LEAVE GOLDEN ASGARD IN NO SAFER HANDS THAN THINE, BRAVE BALDER.
SO IT HATH COME TO THIS THEN--
--THAT A PRINCE OF THE REALM SHOULD DESCEND INTO THIS SMOLDERING EMBODIMENT OF DESPAIR AS NOTHING MORE THAN A COMMON THIEF!
THERE BE LITTLE ENOUGH OF VALUE IN THIS DESOLATE DOMAIN ALREADY.
WOULD THAT I WERE NOT FORCED TO STEAL THE SINGLE SOURCE OF LIGHT THAT REMAINS HERE.


VERILY, THE FICKLE FATES DOTH WEAVE A TAPESTRY OF MOST DEVIOUS DESIGN.
FIRST, ALMIGHTY ODIN DOTH GIVE HIMSELF AMNESIA, THAT HE MIGHT WALK AMONG MORTALS AS ONE OF THEM--
--THEN EVIL IGRON AND THE MONSTROUS MANGOG SEIZE THE GOLDEN THRONE IN THE ALL-FATHER'S ABSENCE--
--AND FINALLY, OUR LORDLY LIEGE IS STOLEN AWAY EVEN AS HE SEEKS TO RETURN TO THE REALM ETERNAL!*
*ALL DISPLAYED IN DETAIL OVER THESE MANY MONTHS PAST. --LEN.
AYE, IT HATH BEEN A TIME MOST PASSING STRANGE FOR IMMORTAL ASGARD--
--AND I FEAR THE MADNESS BE NOT YET OVER!
BUT I MUST NOT LET MY MUSINGS LULL ME FROM THE TASK AT HAND!
COUNTLESS TUNNELS DOTH LOOM NOW BEFORE ME--
--AND I MUST CONSIDER MOST CAREFULLY WHICH OF THEM TO PURSUE!
FOR A PATH WRONGLY TAKEN HERE--
--COULD LEAD ME STRAIGHT TO THE TERRIBLE KINGDOM OF THE INSANELY-SAVAGE TROLLS--
--AND I CAN ALLOW NAUGHT TO STAY ME FROM MY MOST SACRED QUEST!
AND, AT THE TUNNEL'S OTHER END...
SO! I FIND NOT KING GEIRRODUR'S BLAZING FURNACES AFTER ALL--
--BUT ONLY A ROUGH-HEWN BRIDGE THAT APPEARS TO SPAN AN ENDLESS OCEAN OF FLAME!
'TIS INDEED A SIGHT TO MAKE MOST MEN TURN ON THEIR HEEL AND FORSAKE THEIR CHOSEN PATH--
--BUT THE GOD OF THUNDER DOTH KNOW WHAT LIES AT THE END OF THIS CRUMBLING SPAN--
--AND THUS I PRESS EVER ONWARD!

THE UNIMAGINABLE HEAT FROM THE FLAMING SEA FAIRLY BLISTERS THE THUNDER GOD'S FLESH, BUT STILL HE MOVES ON, UNMINDFUL OF THE PAIN...
...UNTIL, AT LAST...
BY ODIN! 'TIS JUST AS MIMIR DESCRIBED IT! BEFORE ME STAND THE GLEAMING GATES OF THE REALM BELOW--
--AND GUARDING THEM, THE DRAGON OF THE RUBY EYE!
PRAISE BE! MY QUEST IS OVER!
WITH YON BEHEMOTH'S GLITTERING ORB IN HAND, MIMIR SHALL AT LAST GRANT ME THE PRECIOUS KNOWLEDGE I DO SEEK!
ONLY A MOMENT LONGER, AND THEN...
STAND ASIDE, ASGARDIAN! THAT SHIMMERING JEWEL IS NOT YOURS TO CLAIM!
WHAT--? WHO DARES--??
I DARE, THUNDER GOD! I, BEFORE WHOM THE VERY MOUNTAINS TREMBLE!
OR HAVE YOU SO SOON FORGOTTEN HE WHOM LEGENDS HAVE EVER CALLED-- ULIK THE INVINCIBLE!
ULIK-- MIGHTIEST OF ALL THE TROLLS!!
NAY, TROLL! THOR HATH NOT FORGOTTEN THEE!
THEN NEITHER HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN ULIK'S POWER-- OR THE BOUNDLESS FURY OF ULIK'S RAGE!

AGAIN I COMMAND YOU, GODLING-- STEP ASIDE, AND LET ULIK CLAIM HIS PRIZE!
STEP ASIDE-- OR DIE!!
ULIK, THOR DOTH SAY THEE-- NAY!
THE GOD OF THUNDER DOTH STAND ASIDE FOR NO MAN OR GOD-- LET ALONE FOR A LOWLY TROLL!
THEN GO AHEAD AND HOLD YOUR GROUND, ASGARDIAN --
--AND LET THIS BE THE PLACE THEY BURY YOU!
THBOOM!
I DID NOT COME HERE TO DO BATTLE WITH YOU, THUNDER GOD--
--BUT THE VERY SURVIVAL OF THE MIGHTY TROLL EMPIRE DEPENDS ON ULIK SECURING THE RUBY EYE--
--AND I WILL DO WHAT I MUST TO SAVE MY PEOPLE!
NOW LIE STILL, THOR-- AND I WILL MAKE YOUR DEATH-BLOW MERCIFULLY SWIFT!

NAY, TROLL! THOU SHALT STRIKE MY DEATH-BLOW NOT AT ALL!
NOT SO LONG AS THOR DOTH WIELD THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR!
CHRAKK!
NOT SO LONG AS THE STRENGTH OF MY SINEWS DOTH BE MORE THAN THE EQUAL OF ANY SUCH AS THEE!
PTHUM!
"IN TRUTH, ULIK-- I DESIRED NOT COMBAT WITH THEE EITHER!
SKRAKKK!
"BUT I CAN ALLOW NO ONE TO KEEP ME FROM GAINING THE RUBY EYE!"
WE CANNOT BOTH POSSESS THAT GLITTERING GEM, GODLING!
THUS THE BATTLE LINES ARE DRAWN--
--AND TO THE VICTOR SHALL GO THE SPOILS, WHICH IS AS IT SHOULD BE--


--FOR THE VICTOR SHALL BE-- ULIK!!
SKROOM!
OD'S BLOOD! THE BESTIAL ONE HURLS THE VERY CAVERN FLOOR AT ME!
AND I'LL DO WORSE BEFORE I'M DONE, ASGARDIAN!
I MUST CAPTURE THE RUBY EYE IF I AM TO GAIN FAVOR ONCE MORE WITH KING GEIRRODUR AND HIS COURT--
--AND IF I CAN DELIVER THEM THE THUNDER GOD'S CORPSE AS AN UNEXPECTED BONUS--
--'TWILL ONLY MAKE MY VICTORY THAT MUCH SWEETER!
KRROW!
THOU DOST SPEAK A MOST GLORIOUS BATTLE DOG OF DARKNESS--
--BUT THE BATTLE WILL TRULY BE WON BY HE WHO IS LEFT STANDING AT ITS END--
--AND, BY ALL THE GODS, THAT ONE SHALL BE-- THOR!
CURSE YOU, GODLING--THERE IS FAR MORE AT STAKE HERE THAN YOUR ASGARDIAN MIND COULD EVER BEGIN TO COMPREHEND!
FOR THE SAKE OF ALL THE TROLL KINGDOM-- ULIK MUST NOT BE DEFEATED!

BY ODIN! WE HAVE TUMBLED BACK UPON THE CRUMBLING BRIDGE THAT STRETCHES OVER THE FLAMING SEA!
A SINGLE MIS-STEP COULD SPELL BLAZING DOOM FOR EITHER OF US!
YET STILL THE TROLL RISES ALMOST BLINDLY TO HIS FEET, HEEDLESS OF THE DANGER! NEVER HAVE I SEEN ULIK MORE RESOLUTE, MORE DETERMINED IN HIS PURPOSE!
COULD THERE TRULY BE SUBSTANCE TO THE BESTIAL ONE'S CLAIMS?
IS THE KINGDOM OF THE TROLLS REALLY IN MORTAL PERIL?
UNFORTUNATELY, IT DOTH NOT MATTER. I CANNOT SACRIFICE THE FUTURE OF ASGARD FOR THE SAKE OF ITS MOST BITTER ENEMIES!
I MUST STRUGGLE ON, EVEN AS DOTH ULIK-- UNTIL THE VICTORY BE WON!
OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE CHALLENGED ULIK'S POWER, THUNDER GOD-- YOU ARE THE MOST VALIANT FOE OF ALL!
BUT STILL THAT SHALL NOT STOP ME FROM HURLING YOU BODILY INTO THE HUNGRY FLAMES THAT LICK AROUND US!
SPOW!
CEASE YOUR FUTILE STRUGGLING, ASGARDIAN!
LET ME STRIKE THE BLOW THAT WILL SEND YOU TO YOUR FINAL REST!
NAY, TROLL--!
IF ANY BLOW IS TO BE STRUCK HERE--
--'TWILL BE MINE!!
BTROK!

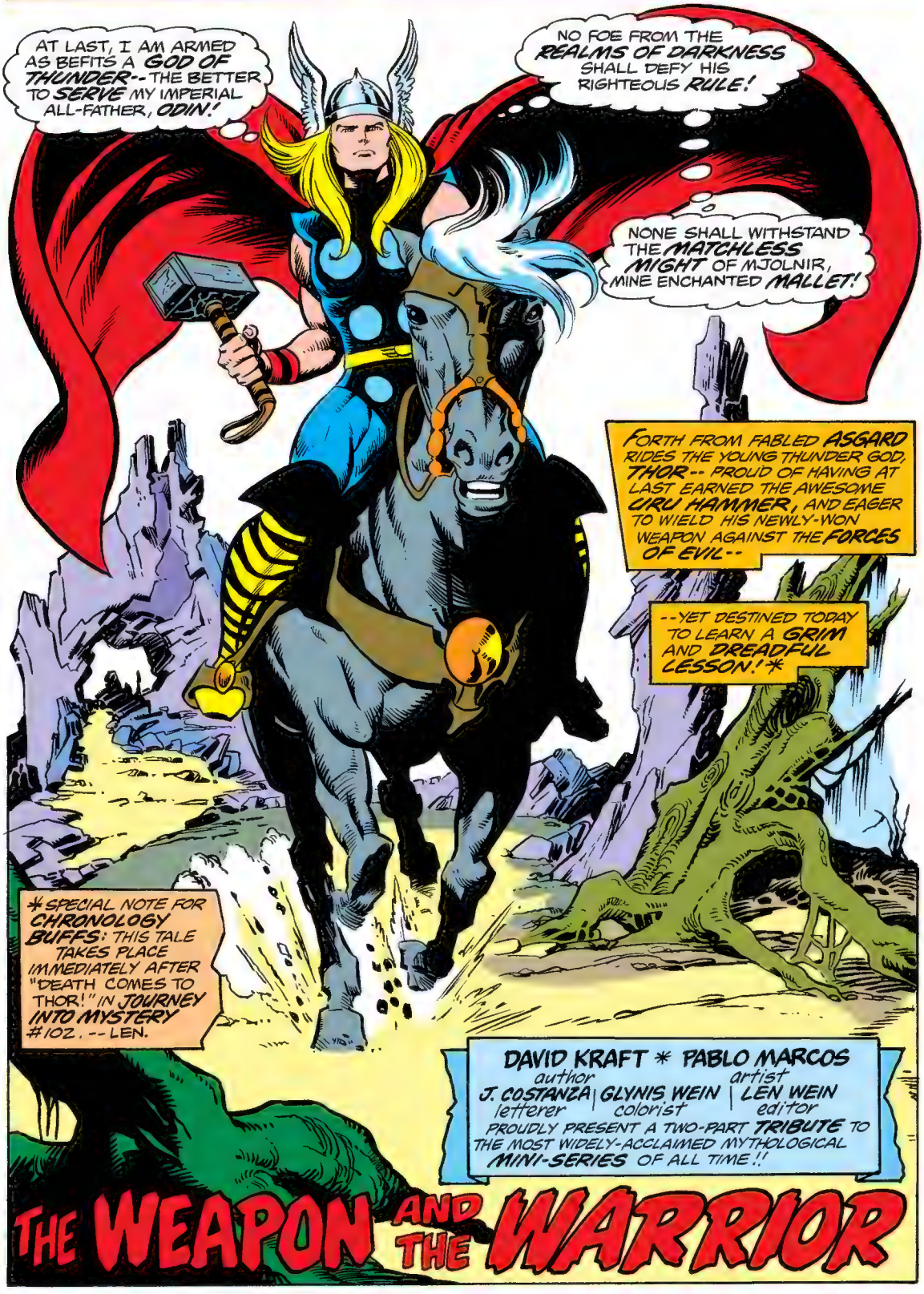
TRULY ART THOU POWERFUL, ULIK--
--BUT THERE IS NAUGHT THAT CAN PREVAIL AGAINST THE POWER OF MJOLNIR, THE URU HAMMER FORGED IN THINE OWN INFERNAL FURNACES!
MY HEAD-- REELING FROM THE FORCE OF YOUR BLOW--! I STAGGER BACK--EVER BACK--
--BUT ONLY UNTIL ULIK IS IN POSITION TO DO--
THIS!
AARRGGHH!!
AND THUS THE BATTLE IS OVER, ASGARDIAN FOOL!
THERE IS A LESSON TAUGHT YOUR KIND AT CHILDHOOD THAT YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE FORGOTTEN!
NEVER TRUST A TROLL!
AND NOW THAT I HAVE SLAIN THE THUNDER GOD, ULIK IS TRULY THE MIGHTIEST TROLL OF ALL!!

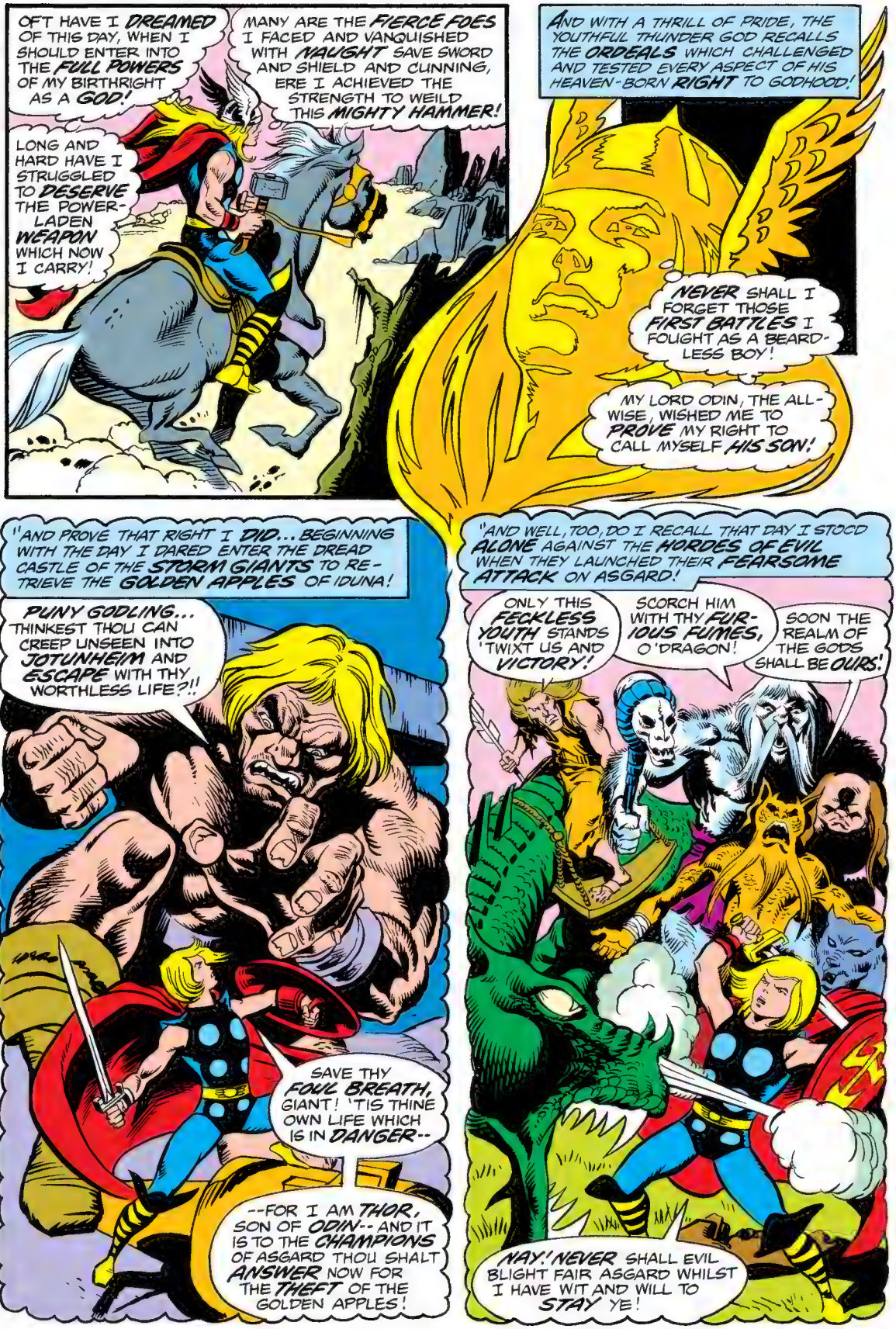
NEXT ISSUE:

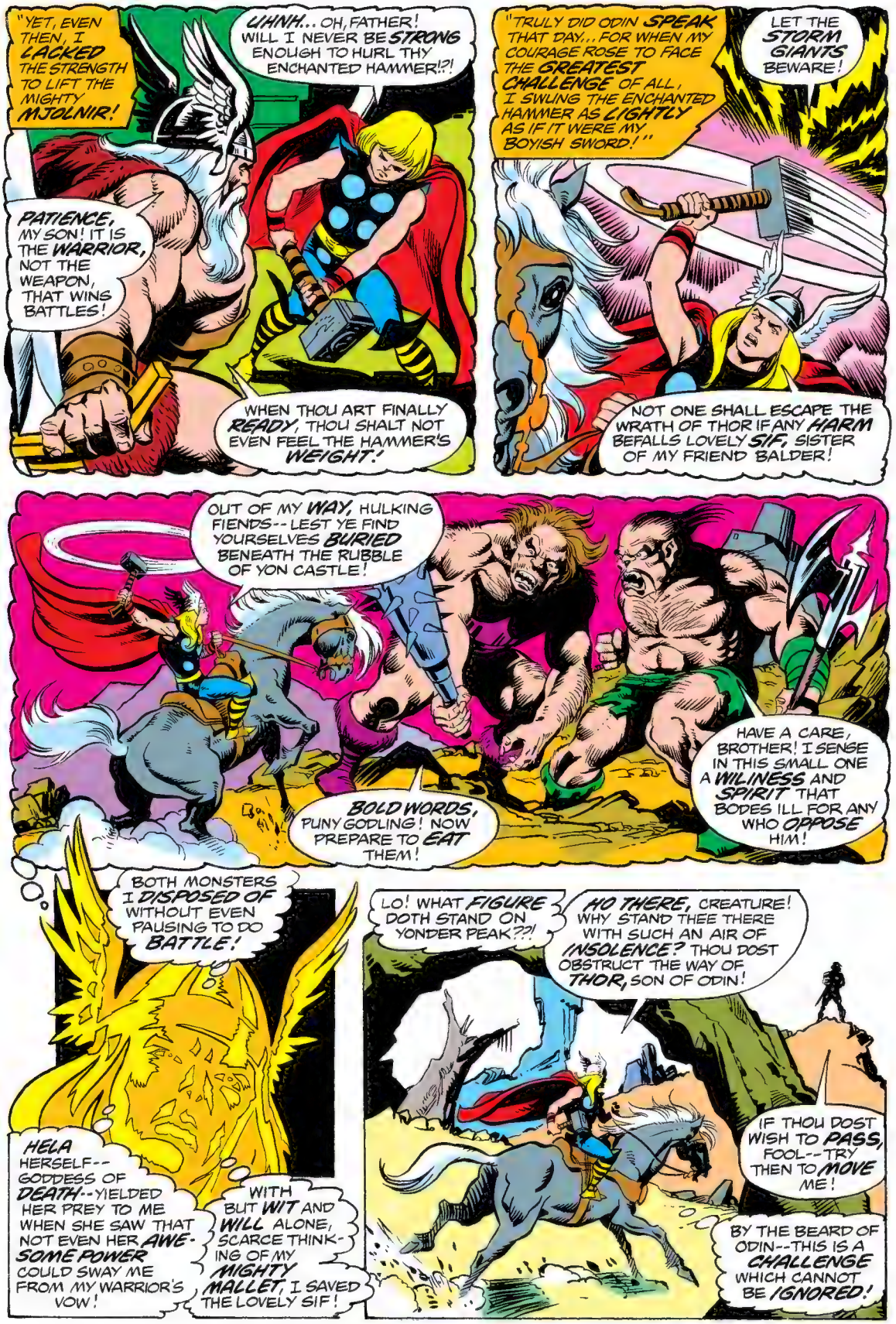
MORE MIND-BENDING ACTION THAN YOU'VE EVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE, AS ULIK GOES BERSERK! BE HERE FOR...

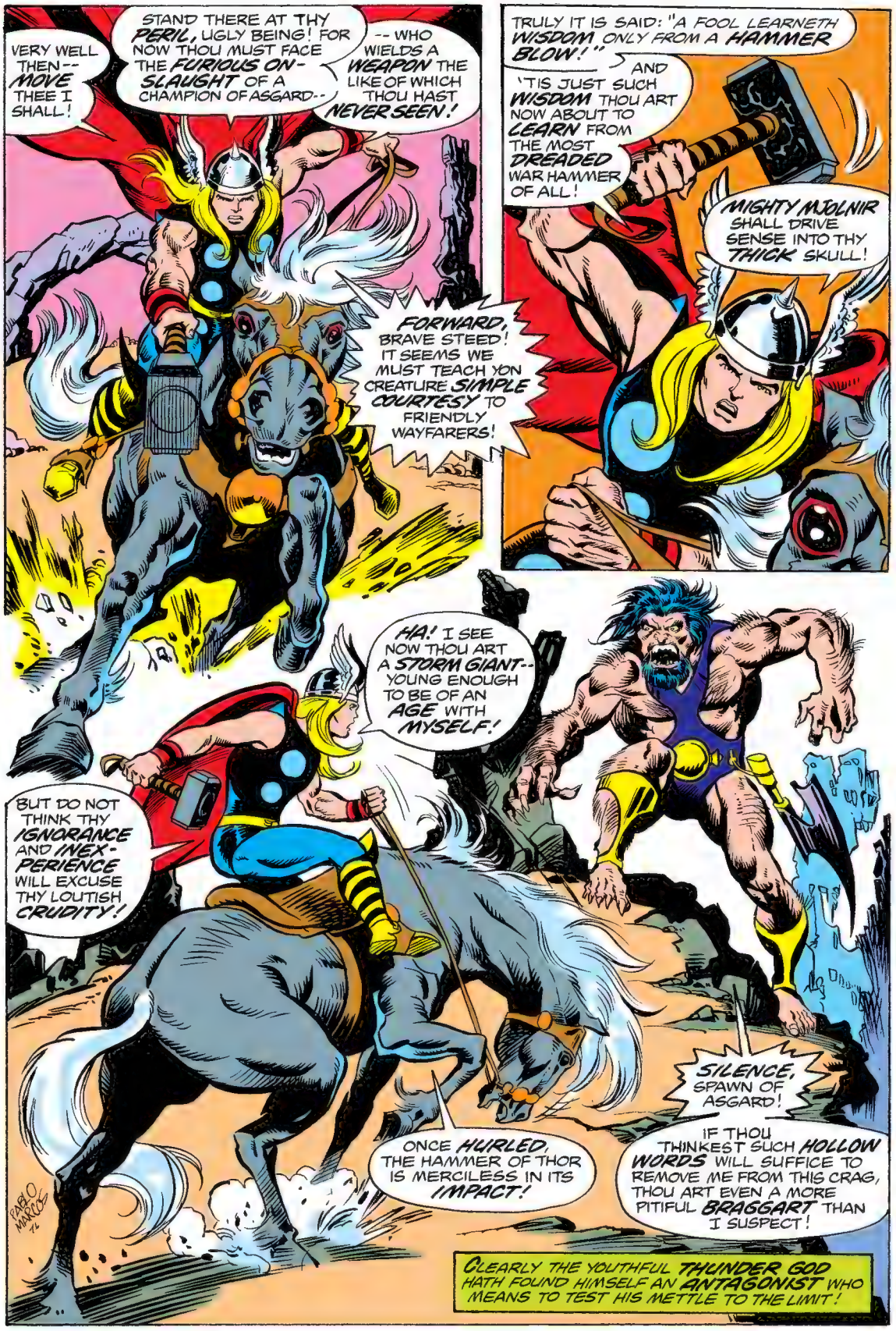
"CHAOS IN THE KINGDOM OF THE TROLLS!"

TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS™

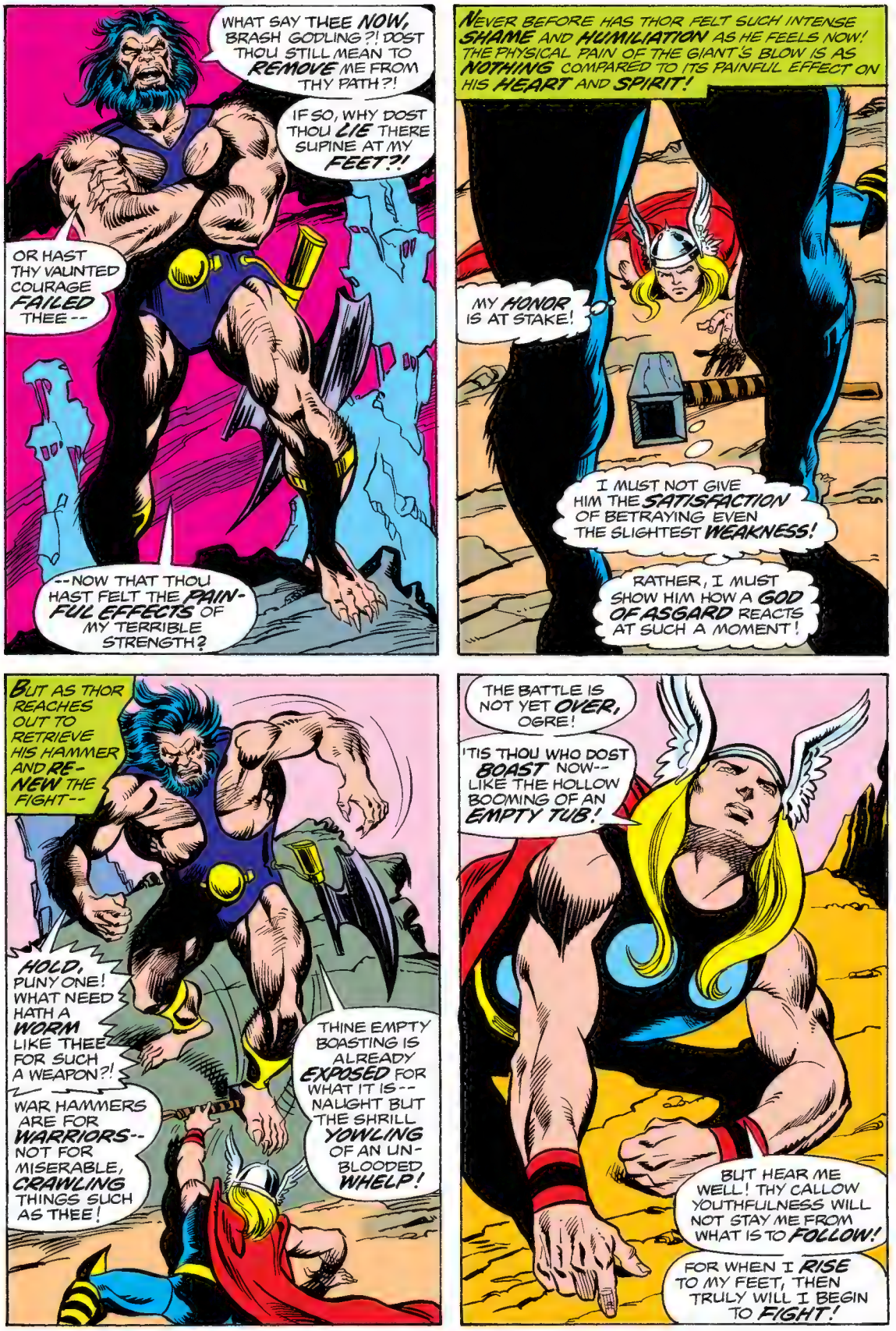

AT LAST, I AM ARMED AS BEFITS A GOD OF THUNDER--THE BETTER TO SERVE MY IMPERIAL ALL-FATHER, ODIN!
NO FOE FROM THE REALMS OF DARKNESS SHALL DEFY HIS RIGHTEOUS RULE!
NONE SHALL WITHSTAND THE MATCHLESS MIGHT OF MJOLNIR, MINE ENCHANTED MALLET!
FORTH FROM FABLED ASGARD RIDES THE YOUNG THUNDER GOD, THOR--PROUD OF HAVING AT LAST EARNED THE AWESOME ORU HAMMER, AND EAGER TO WIELD HIS NEWLY-WON WEAPON AGAINST THE FORCES OF EVIL--
--YET DESTINED TODAY TO LEARN A GRIM AND DREADFUL LESSON!*
*SPECIAL NOTE FOR CHRONOLOGY BUFFS: THIS TALE TAKES PLACE IMMEDIATELY AFTER "DEATH COMES TO THOR!" IN JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #102. --LEN.
DAVID KRAFT * PABLO MARCOS
author artist
J. COSTANZA | GLYNIS WEIN | LEN WEIN
letterer colorist editor
PROUDLY PRESENT A TWO-PART TRIBUTE TO THE MOST WIDELY-ACCLAIMED MYTHOLOGICAL MINI-SERIES OF ALL TIME!!
THE WEAPON AND THE WARRIOR


OFT HAVE I DREAMED OF THIS DAY, WHEN I SHOULD ENTER INTO THE FULL POWERS OF MY BIRTHRIGHT AS A GOD!
MANY ARE THE FIERCE FOES I FACED AND VANQUISHED WITH NAUGHT SAVE SWORD AND SHIELD AND CUNNING, ERE I ACHIEVED THE STRENGTH TO WEILD THIS MIGHTY HAMMER!
LONG AND HARD HAVE I STRUGGLED TO DESERVE THE POWER-LADEN WEAPON WHICH NOW I CARRY!
AND WITH A THRILL OF PRIDE, THE YOUTHFUL THUNDER GOD RECALLS THE ORDEALS WHICH CHALLENGED AND TESTED EVERY ASPECT OF HIS HEAVEN-BORN RIGHT TO GODHOOD!
NEVER SHALL I FORGET THOSE FIRST BATTLES I FOUGHT AS A BEARDLESS BOY!
MY LORD ODIN, THE ALL-WISE, WISHED ME TO PROVE MY RIGHT TO CALL MYSELF HIS SON!
"AND PROVE THAT RIGHT I DID... BEGINNING WITH THE DAY I DARED ENTER THE DREAD CASTLE OF THE STORM GIANTS TO RETRIEVE THE GOLDEN APPLES OF IDUNA!
PUNY GODLING... THINKEST THOU CAN CREEP UNSEEN INTO JOTUNHEIM AND ESCAPE WITH THY WORTHLESS LIFE?!!
SAVE THY FOUL BREATH, GIANT! 'TIS THINE OWN LIFE WHICH IS IN DANGER--
--FOR I AM THOR, SON OF ODIN-- AND IT IS TO THE CHAMPIONS OF ASGARD THOU SHALT ANSWER NOW FOR THE THEFT OF THE GOLDEN APPLES!
"AND WELL, TOO, DO I RECALL THAT DAY I STOOD ALONE AGAINST THE HORDES OF EVIL WHEN THEY LAUNCHED THEIR FEARSOME ATTACK ON ASGARD!
ONLY THIS FECKLESS YOUTH STANDS 'TWIXT US AND VICTORY!
SCORCH HIM WITH THY FURIOUS FUMES, O 'DRAGON!
SOON THE REALM OF THE GODS SHALL BE OURS!
NAY! NEVER SHALL EVIL BLIGHT FAIR ASGARD WHILST I HAVE WIT AND WILL TO STAY YE!


"YET, EVEN THEN, I LACKED THE STRENGTH TO LIFT THE MIGHTY MJOLNIR!
UHNH... OH, FATHER! WILL I NEVER BE STRONG ENOUGH TO HURL THY ENCHANTED HAMMER!?!
PATIENCE, MY SON! IT IS THE WARRIOR, NOT THE WEAPON, THAT WINS BATTLES!
WHEN THOU ART FINALLY READY, THOU SHALT NOT EVEN FEEL THE HAMMER'S WEIGHT!
"TRULY DID ODIN SPEAK THAT DAY,,, FOR WHEN MY COURAGE ROSE TO FACE THE GREATEST CHALLENGE OF ALL, I SWUNG THE ENCHANTED HAMMER AS LIGHTLY AS IF IT WERE MY BOYISH SWORD!"
LET THE STORM GIANTS BEWARE!
NOT ONE SHALL ESCAPE THE WRATH OF THOR IF ANY HARM BEFALLS LOVELY SIF, SISTER OF MY FRIEND BALDER!
OUT OF MY WAY, HULKING FIENDS--LEST YE FIND YOURSELVES BURIED BENEATH THE RUBBLE OF YON CASTLE!
BOLD WORDS, PUNY GODLING! NOW PREPARE TO EAT THEM!
HAVE A CARE, BROTHER! I SENSE IN THIS SMALL ONE A WILINESS AND SPIRIT THAT BODES ILL FOR ANY WHO OPPOSE HIM!
BOTH MONSTERS I DISPOSED OF WITHOUT EVEN PAUSING TO DO BATTLE!
HELA HERSELF--GODDESS OF DEATH--YIELDED HER PREY TO ME WHEN SHE SAW THAT NOT EVEN HER AWESOME POWER COULD SWAY ME FROM MY WARRIOR'S VOW!
WITH BUT WIT AND WILL ALONE, SCARCE THINKING OF MY MIGHTY MALLET, I SAVED THE LOVELY SIF!
LO! WHAT FIGURE DOTH STAND ON YONDER PEAK??!
HO THERE, CREATURE! WHY STAND THEE THERE WITH SUCH AN AIR OF INSOLENCE? THOU DOST OBSTRUCT THE WAY OF THOR, SON OF ODIN!
IF THOU DOST WISH TO PASS, FOOL--TRY THEN TO MOVE ME!
BY THE BEARD OF ODIN--THIS IS A CHALLENGE WHICH CANNOT BE IGNORED!


VERY WELL THEN-- MOVE THEE I SHALL!
STAND THERE AT THY PERIL, UGLY BEING! FOR NOW THOU MUST FACE THE FURIOUS ONSLAUGHT OF A CHAMPION OF ASGARD--
-- WHO WIELDS A WEAPON THE LIKE OF WHICH THOU HAST NEVER SEEN!
FORWARD, BRAVE STEED! IT SEEMS WE MUST TEACH YON CREATURE SIMPLE COURTESY TO FRIENDLY WAYFARERS!
TRULY IT IS SAID: "A FOOL LEARNETH WISDOM ONLY FROM A HAMMER BLOW!"
AND 'TIS JUST SUCH WISDOM THOU ART NOW ABOUT TO LEARN FROM THE MOST DREADED WAR HAMMER OF ALL!
MIGHTY MJOLNIR SHALL DRIVE SENSE INTO THY THICK SKULL!
HA! I SEE NOW THOU ART A STORM GIANT-- YOUNG ENOUGH TO BE OF AN AGE WITH MYSELF!
BUT DO NOT THINK THY IGNORANCE AND INEXPERIENCE WILL EXCUSE THY LOUTISH CRUDITY!
SILENCE, SPAWN OF ASGARD!
ONCE HURLED, THE HAMMER OF THOR IS MERCILESS IN ITS IMPACT!
IF THOU THINKEST SUCH HOLLOW WORDS WILL SUFFICE TO REMOVE ME FROM THIS CRAG, THOU ART EVEN A MORE PITIFUL BRAGGART THAN I SUSPECT!
CLEARLY THE YOUTHFUL THUNDER GOD HATH FOUND HIMSELF AN ANTAGONIST WHO MEANS TO TEST HIS METTLE TO THE LIMIT!
PABLO MARCOS '12

So begins a FATEFUL CONFRONTATION between the bold young immortal--newly armed with his mighty URU HAMMER--and his fearsome, equally youthful foe, flush with all the terrifying power of his GIANTHOOD!
THROOOM!
Know thee that my HAMMER speaks with the voice of THUNDER and LIGHTNING!
HA, puny offspring of Odin! 'Tis clear the WHIRLWIND comes mainly from thine OPEN MOUTH!
Tho' I be a STORM GIANT, I have just served an APPRENTICESHIP in the deepest mines and workshops of the TROLLS!
And WOE betide him to whom it speaks in WRATH!
With thine INSOLENCE, giant, thou hast sown the WIND--and now shall ye reap the WHIRLWIND!
Thus, from EARTH itself I draw my immovable STRENGTH and POWER!
And now, fairhaired FOOL, thou shalt FEEL that power! For when I heft this ROCK and hurl it at thee--
--it shall strike thee with the AWESOME WEIGHT of Midgard itself--
--and smash thee to the ground at my FEET where thou dost BELONG!
And, indeed, the SHATTERING IMPACT of the rocky missile is TOO GREAT for even young Thor to WITHSTAND!
DAK-KOOM
I-I should have FORESEEN his move--
--and given thought to ways of EVADING his counter-attack!


WHAT SAY THEE NOW, BRASH GODLING?! DOST THOU STILL MEAN TO REMOVE ME FROM THY PATH?!
IF SO, WHY DOST THOU LIE THERE SUPINE AT MY FEET?!
OR HAST THY VAUNTED COURAGE FAILED THEE --
--NOW THAT THOU HAST FELT THE PAIN-FUL EFFECTS OF MY TERRIBLE STRENGTH?
NEVER BEFORE HAS THOR FELT SUCH INTENSE SHAME AND HUMILIATION AS HE FEELS NOW! THE PHYSICAL PAIN OF THE GIANT'S BLOW IS AS NOTHING COMPARED TO ITS PAINFUL EFFECT ON HIS HEART AND SPIRIT!
MY HONOR IS AT STAKE!
I MUST NOT GIVE HIM THE SATISFACTION OF BETRAYING EVEN THE SLIGHTEST WEAKNESS!
RATHER, I MUST SHOW HIM HOW A GOD OF ASGARD REACTS AT SUCH A MOMENT!
BUT AS THOR REACHES OUT TO RETRIEVE HIS HAMMER AND RE-NEW THE FIGHT--
HOLD, PUNY ONE! WHAT NEED HATH A WORM LIKE THEE FOR SUCH A WEAPON?!
WAR HAMMERS ARE FOR WARRIORS-- NOT FOR MISERABLE, CRAWLING THINGS SUCH AS THEE!
THINE EMPTY BOASTING IS ALREADY EXPOSED FOR WHAT IT IS-- NAUGHT BUT THE SHRILL YOWLING OF AN UN-BLOODED WHELP!
THE BATTLE IS NOT YET OVER, OGRE!
'TIS THOU WHO DOST BOAST NOW-- LIKE THE HOLLOW BOOMING OF AN EMPTY TUB!
BUT HEAR ME WELL! THY CALLOW YOUTHFULNESS WILL NOT STAY ME FROM WHAT IS TO FOLLOW!
FOR WHEN I RISE TO MY FEET, THEN TRULY WILL I BEGIN TO FIGHT!

LOOK INTO MINE EYES, BLUSTERING WINDBAG, AND READ THY FATE!
WITH MY BARE HANDS I SHALL REMOVE THINE UGLY PRESENCE FROM THE LAND--FOREVER!
FOOL! NOT ONE STEP CANST THOU TAKE WITHOUT SINKING UNDER THE WEIGHT OF THINE OWN BOASTFUL LIES!
EVEN AS THE GIANT SPEAKS, THE GROUND SEEMS TO GIVE WAY BENEATH THE FEET OF THE YOUNG THUNDER GOD!
TROLL MAGIC!
KRAKK
HE MUST HAVE CAST A SPELL LEARNED DURING HIS APPRENTICESHIP TO THOSE ACCURSED CREATURES OF THE UNDERGROUND!
BY THE BURNISHED BLADE OF HEIMDALL! THE EARTH ITSELF IS OPENING TO ENTRAP ME!
AND DESPITE HIS VALIANT STRUGGLES, THE IMMORTAL YOUTH FINDS HIMSELF SINKING DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO A ROCKY BOTTOMLESS ABYSS!
NOW, WITLESS GODLING, THE TIME HAS COME TO PUT AN END TO THY VAINGLORIOUS RANTING!
LET ME HEAR THY CRIES OF FEAR BEFORE I SMASH THEE INTO OBLIVION!
THOR KNOWS NOT THE MEANING OF FEAR!
'TWAS OVER-CONFIDENCE THAT BROUGHT ME TO THIS PASS--ALL BECAUSE I FORGOT THE SAGE COUNSEL OF ODIN AND CAME TO DEPEND TOO MUCH ON MY MIGHTY HAMMER!
THO' I AM IN GRAVE DANGER THE BATTLE IS NOT YET OVER!
EVEN IN THE DEATHLESS ANNALS OF VALHALLA, ONE CAN FIND FEW MORE STIRRING SAGAS THAN THE TALE OF HOW YOUNG THOR FINALLY FOUGHT BACK!
BE HERE NEXT ISSUE FOR THE CATACLYSMIC CONCLUSION OF:
THE WEAPON AND THE WARRIOR!

THOR
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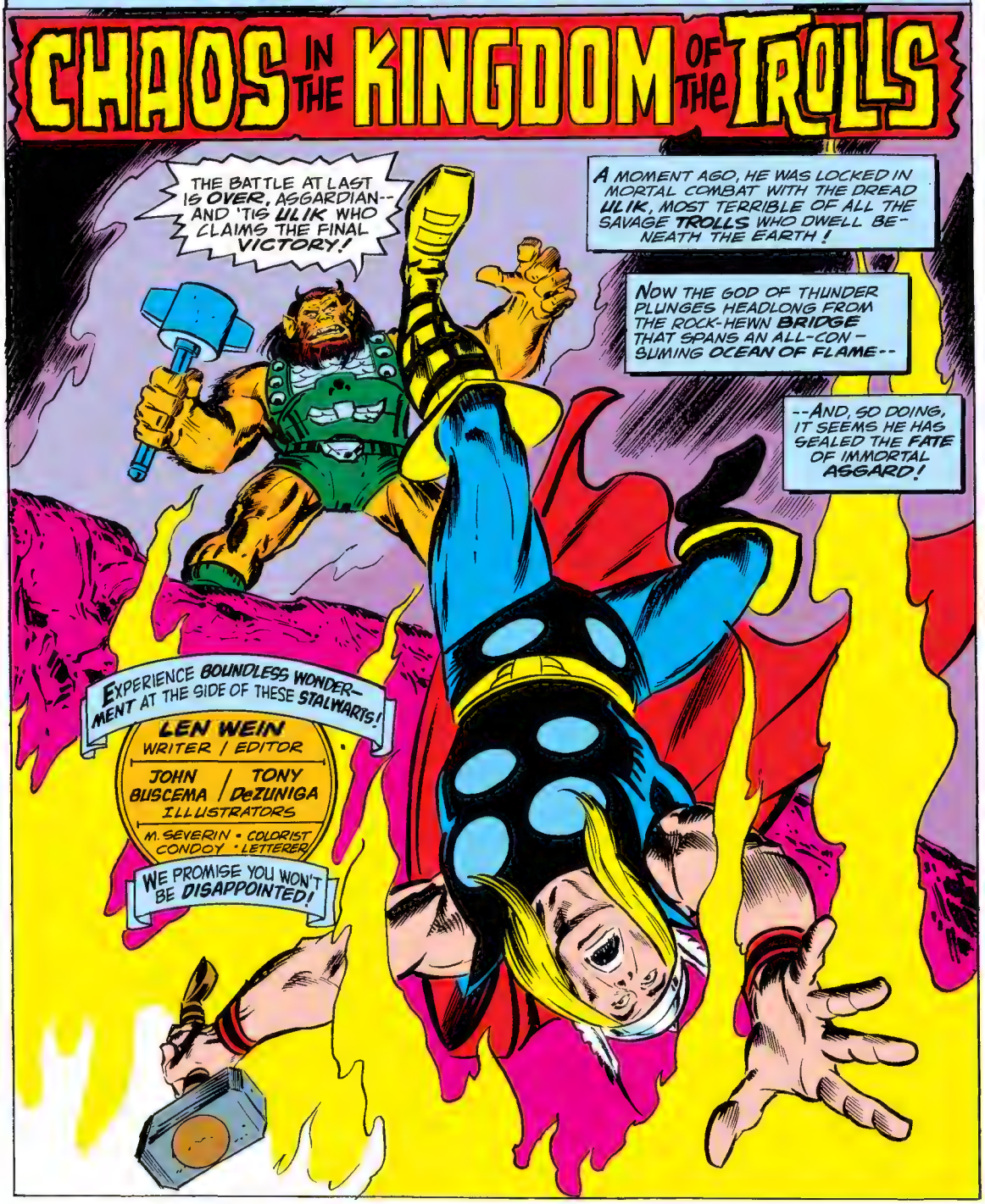
THE MIGHTY
THOR®
SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH ULIK!
THUNDER GOD and TROLL-- TOGETHER AGAINST THE MOST AWESOME MONSTER OF ALL!
TM

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

C-120

CHAOS IN THE KINGDOM OF THE TROLLS


THE BATTLE AT LAST IS OVER, ASGARDIAN-- AND 'TIS ULIK WHO CLAIMS THE FINAL VICTORY!
A MOMENT AGO, HE WAS LOCKED IN MORTAL COMBAT WITH THE DREAD ULIK, MOST TERRIBLE OF ALL THE SAVAGE TROLLS WHO DWELL BENEATH THE EARTH!
NOW THE GOD OF THUNDER PLUNGES HEADLONG FROM THE ROCK-HEWN BRIDGE THAT SPANS AN ALL-CONSUMING OCEAN OF FLAME--
--AND, SO DOING, IT SEEMS HE HAS SEALED THE FATE OF IMMORTAL ASGARD!
EXPERIENCE BOUNDLESS WONDERMENT AT THE SIDE OF THESE STALWARTS!
LEN WEIN
WRITER / EDITOR
JOHN BUSCEMA / TONY DeZUNIGA
ILLUSTRATORS
M. SEVERIN • COLORIST
CONDOY • LETTERER
WE PROMISE YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED!

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YOU FOUGHT WELL, THUNDER GOD-- BUT YOUR GUILELESS GALLANTRY WAS YOUR DOWNFALL!
BY SHOWING ME MERCY WHEN YOU THOUGHT ME DEFEATED, YOU LEFT YOURSELF OPEN FOR MY MOST TREACHEROUS BLOW!
I WARNED YOU IN BATTLE, ASGARDIAN, THAT ONLY ONE OF US COULD LIVE TO CLAIM THE RUBY EYE OF YON DRAGON--
--HE WHO GUARDS THE GOLDEN GATES TO THE REALM BELOW--
--AND THAT ONE SHALL BE-- ULIK!
A SAVAGE CRY OF BATTLE ON HIS SLAVERING LIPS, THE MONSTROUS TROLL THUNDERS FORTH TO MEET THE GREAT BELLOWING GUARDIAN...
...AND SPEAKING OF THUNDER...!
VERILY, IF THOR DOTH NOW PERISH, 'TWILL MEAN THE END OF THE REALM ETERNAL!
FOR I HAVE SWORN TO PRESENT THE RUBY EYE TO THE ALL-KNOWING MIMIR, THAT HE MIGHT TELL ME THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE LONG-MISSING ODIN--
--AND NOT ALL THE FLAMES OF THE FIERY PIT NOR ALL THE MIGHT OF THE VILE TROLL EMPIRE SHALL STAY ME FROM MY QUEST!
NOT SO LONG AS THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR IS STILL MINE TO COMMAND!
NOT SO LONG AS THOR IS STILL GOD OF THUNDER!!

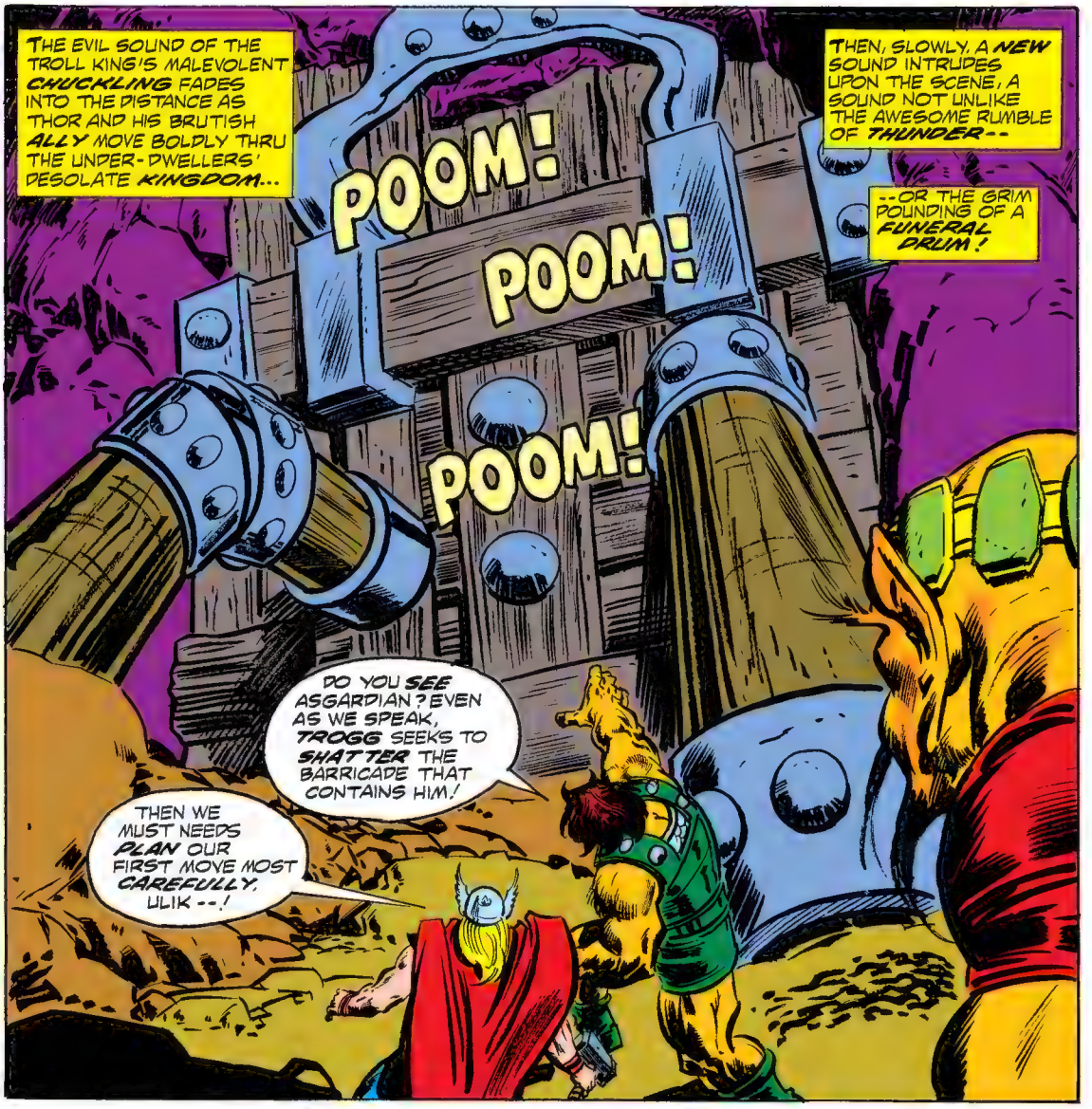
'TIS AS I SUSPECTED! THINKING ME DEAD, ULIK HATH RETURNED TO HIS PRIMARY TASK--
--AND VERILY, 'TIS A MOST DISTASTEFUL TASK INDEED!
THUS, IT IS A TASK THAT ULIK REVELS IN PERFORMING, HIS BLUDGEONING BATTLE-MACE SLASHING SAVAGELY THRU THE SWELTERING AIR, DRIVING THE LEGENDARY GUARDIAN BACK--
--BACK--
--UNTIL, AT LAST, THE BLOODY-HANDED CAVE-BRUTE PROVES THAT EVEN A LEGEND CAN DIE!
THUS PERISH ALL WHO STAND IN ULIK'S WAY!
SKROOM!
AND, HIS GRISLY TASK COMPLETED, ULIK CLAIMS HIS PRIZE!
THERE! THIS GLITTERING GEM IS FINALLY MINE!
IN MY HAND, I HOLD THE FUTURE OF ALL THE MIGHTY TROLL EMPIRE!
BUT THOU MUST PASS BY ME TO RETURN TO THY KINGDOM, BESTIAL ONE--
--AND THOU HAST NOT POWER ENOW TO ACCOMPLISH THAT TASK!
SO, ASGARDIAN, YOU STILL LIVE--
--BUT THAT IS AN OVERSIGHT THAT CAN QUICKLY BE CORRECTED!
THOU ATTACKEST BOLDLY, TROLL!

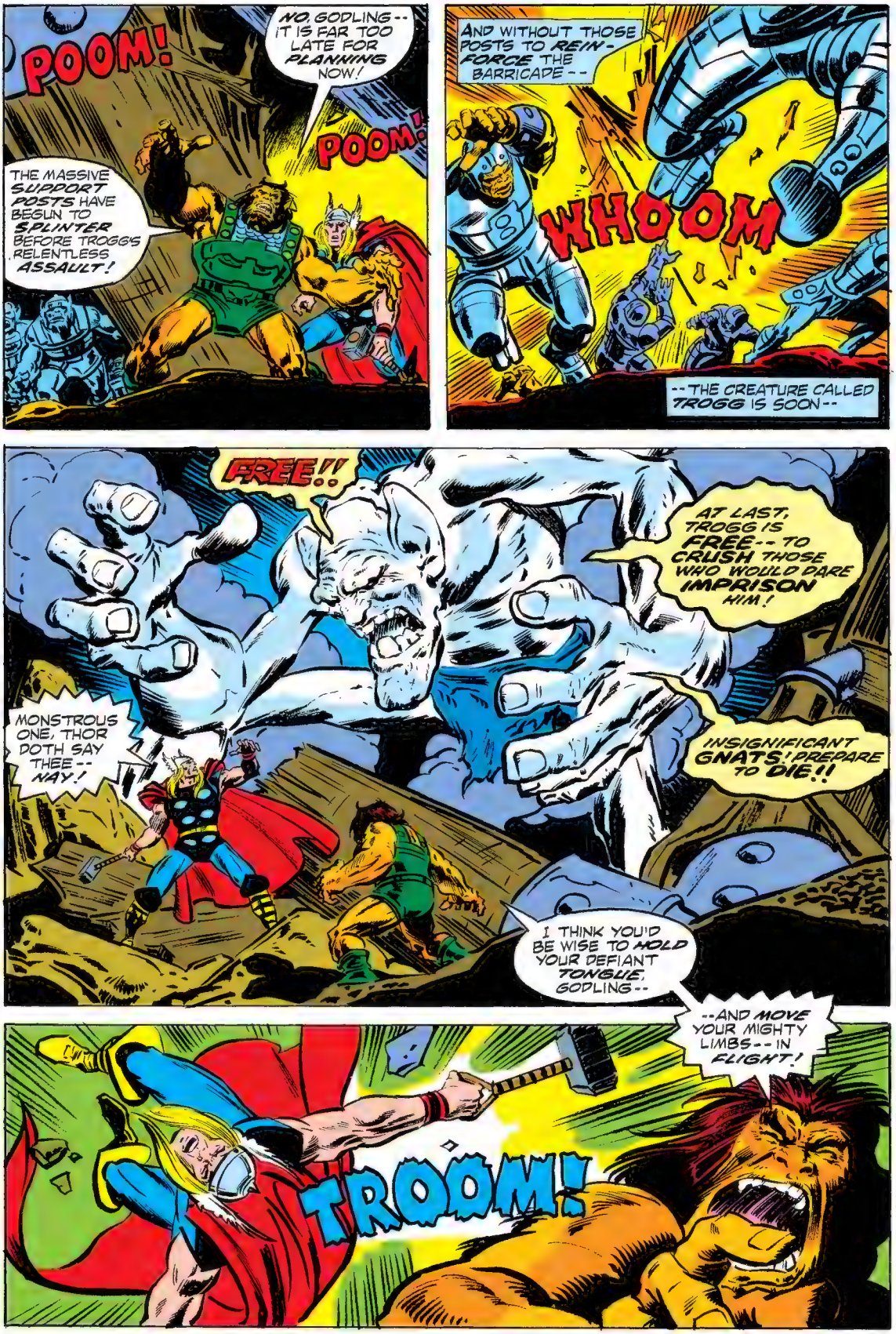
AARRGHH!!
BROK!
CAN IT BE THOU HAST SO SOON FORGOTTEN THE POWER OF MINE ENCHANTED HAMMER?
OR THE AWESOME STRENGTH OF MINE OWN IMMORTAL SINEWS?
CHUDD!
I SAY THEE, ULIK--RELEASE THE RUBY EYE!
IN ODIN'S NAME--IT MUST BE MINE!
ALL THAT WILL BE YOURS HERE, THUNDER GOD, IS A SWIFT AND FLAMING DEATH!
THEIR BATTLE IS THE STUFF OF MYTH AND MAJESTY, AND THE VERY CAVERNS TREMBLE BEFORE THEIR RAGE--
--UNTIL THE CRUMBLING BRIDGE UPON WHICH THEY STRUGGLE CAN BEAR THE STRAIN NO LONGER--
--AND, GROANING, IT COLLAPSES!
ODIN'S EYES! WE ARE UNDONE!
THE CURSED BRIDGE FALLS AWAY BENEATH US!
UNLESS MY GRIP IS SURE, MY DOOM IS SEALED!
BUT IT SEEMS ULIK'S GRIP UPON THE JAGGED ROCK IS FAR MORE CERTAIN THAN HIS GRIP UPON ONE SOLITARY GEM...
SURTUR'S FLAMES! I'VE DROPPED THE RUBY EYE!

NAY! IF THE JEWEL DOTH PLUNGE INTO YON HUNGRY FLAMES, 'TIS LOST TO US BOTH!
ONLY MINE ENCHANTED MALLET CAN HOPE TO RETRIEVE IT NOW!
THUS, FOR THE SAKE OF THE REALM ETERNAL, LET MINE ARM BE STRONG--
--LET MINE AIM BE TRUE--
--AND LET THE MYSTIC MJOLNIR DELIVER UNTO ME MY LONG-SOUGHT PRIZE!
IT'S A PRIZE YOU'LL NOT LIVE TO DEPART WITH, ASGARDIAN!
THE FATE OF THE ENTIRE TROLL EMPIRE HANGS ON MY RETURNING THERE WITH THE RUBY EYE--
--AND I WILL SLAY YOU, THUNDER GOD, OR BE SLAIN MYSELF BEFORE I WILL GIVE IT UP!
THY WORDS ARE HOLLOW ECHOES IN A BLACK AND BITTER WIND, BESTIAL ONE!
WHAT NEED HAVE TROLLS FOR A GEM SUCH AS THIS, WHEN THOU HAST SUCH AWESOME WEAPONRY ALREADY AT THY COMMAND?
BUT 'TIS EXACTLY SUCH WEAPONRY THAT HAS BROUGHT THIS SHADOW OF DOOM UPON US, BLONDHAIR!
FOR CENTURIES UNTOLD, WE TROLLS HAVE TOILED CEASELESSLY BENEATH THE EARTH--
--OUR UNMATCHED MACHINERY DIGGING, FOREVER DIGGING--
"--TO HELP US ACHIEVE OUR INEVITABLE DOMINATION OVER EVERYTHING THAT LIVES!

"WE WERE USING OUR NEWEST, MOST POWERFUL DRILLERNAUT WHEN WE BROKE THRU THE TUNNEL WALL--
"--INTO AN UNKNOWN CAVERN BEYOND, OR PERHAPS INTO ANOTHER DIMENSION--
"--WHEREIN LURKED THE CURSED CREATURE CALLED--TROGG!!
"TROLLS BEYOND NUMBER PERISHED, ATTEMPTING TO SEAL THE PORTAL BETWEEN TROGG'S WORLD AND OURS--
"--BUT, AT LAST, WE CONSTRUCTED A PROTECTIVE BARRICADE ACROSS THE PORTAL--
"--A BARRICADE THAT EVEN NOW THREATENS TO GIVE WAY!"
ONLY THE RUBY EYE CAN SEAL THE PORTAL PERMANENTLY, THUNDER GOD--
--AND I MEAN TO POSSESS IT--OR DIE!
ODIN'S TRUTH! I BELIEVE THEE, TROLL!
BUT MAYHAP THERE IS A WAY THAT NEITHER OF US NEEDS PERISH OVER THAT GLITTERING JEWEL.
WHAT IF THOR WERE TO RETURN WITH THEE TO THY KINGDOM, ULIK--AND HELP THEE DEFEAT THIS TROGG WITHOUT SACRIFICING THE RUBY EYE?
THEN WE WOULD BOTH HAVE THAT WHICH WE SO DESIRE!
WHAT?!?
ALLY MYSELF WITH YOU--MY MOST BITTER ENEMY? I WOULD SOONER..
NO.
PERHAPS YOU ARE RIGHT, ASGARDIAN. PERHAPS THERE IS NO OTHER WAY.
THUS, THOUGH MY VERY SOUL CURDLES AT THE THOUGHT, ASGARDIAN--
--YOU MAY ACCOMPANY ME... HOME!
DOWN TWISTING CORRIDORS, THRU TUNNELS THICK WITH ANCIENT DUST, THE RELUCTANT COMPANIONS TRAVEL.
UNTIL, AT LENGTH...
HAIL, KING GEIRRODUR--WISEST OF ALL THE TROLLS!
HAIL, ULIK! HAVE YOU...?
FAFNIR'S BREATH! WHAT MANNER OF MADNESS IS THIS?

ARE YOU INSANE, ULIK, BRINGING THOR -- THE VERY PRINCE OF ACCURSED ASGARD, WITH WHOM WE HAVE WARRED FOR CENTURIES BEYOND RECKONING -- RIGHT INTO OUR MIDST?
BUT THE THUNDER GOD DOES NOT COME AS A FOE, GEIRRODUR.
HE HAS COME TO BATTLE TROGG!
VERILY, GEIRRODUR -- ULIK SPEAKS TRUE! I MEAN TO HARM TO THEE AND THINE.
ON THAT, THOU HAST THE MOST SOLEMN WORD OF THOR!
AND THE HONOR OF THE FOOLISH ASGARDIAN IS LEGENDARY, ISN'T IT?
VERY WELL, ULIK -- TAKE THE GODLING AND DO WHATEVER YOU MUST!


THE EVIL SOUND OF THE TROLL KING'S MALEVOLENT CHUCKLING FADES INTO THE DISTANCE AS THOR AND HIS BRUTISH ALLY MOVE BOLDLY THRU THE UNDER-DWELLERS' DESOLATE KINGDOM...
POOM!
POOM!
POOM!
THEN, SLOWLY, A NEW SOUND INTRUDES UPON THE SCENE, A SOUND NOT UNLIKE THE AWESOME RUMBLE OF THUNDER --
-- OR THE GRIM POUNDING OF A FUNERAL DRUM!
DO YOU SEE ASGARDIAN? EVEN AS WE SPEAK, TROGG SEEKS TO SHATTER THE BARRICADE THAT CONTAINS HIM!
THEN WE MUST NEEDS PLAN OUR FIRST MOVE MOST CAREFULLY, ULIK --!


POOM!
NO, GODLING -- IT IS FAR TOO LATE FOR PLANNING NOW!
POOM!
THE MASSIVE SUPPORT POSTS HAVE BEGUN TO SPLINTER BEFORE TROGG'S RELENTLESS ASSAULT!
AND WITHOUT THOSE POSTS TO REIN-FORCE THE BARRICADE --
WHOOM
--THE CREATURE CALLED TROGG IS SOON--
FREE!!
AT LAST, TROGG IS FREE -- TO CRUSH THOSE WHO WOULD DARE IMPRISON HIM!
MONSTROUS ONE, THOR DOTH SAY THEE -- NAY!
INSIGNIFICANT GNATS! PREPARE TO DIE!!
I THINK YOU'D BE WISE TO HOLD YOUR DEFIANT TONGUE, GODLING --
--AND MOVE YOUR MIGHTY LIMBS -- IN FLIGHT!
TROOM!

YOU ARE MORE AGILE THAN I IMAGINED, LITTLE GNATS! YOU AVOIDED THE BRUNT OF MY FIRST BLOW!
BUT NOTHING THAT LIVES CAN ELUDE THE INFERNAL POWER THAT IS TROGG'S ALONE!

BEWARE, THUNDER GOD-- PROTECT YOUR FLANK!
THE SON OF ODIN NEED NO LESSONS IN THE ART OF BATTLE, TROLL!
THOR IS A WARRIOR BORN!
SHOOM!

STAND STILL, LITTLE GNATS! CURSE YOU-- STAND STILL!!
I WARN YOU-- THE VENGEANCE OF TROGG IS ALL-CONSUMING!
SWIFTLY, ULIK, WHILST I DRAW THE GIANT'S FIRE--
--ATTACK!!

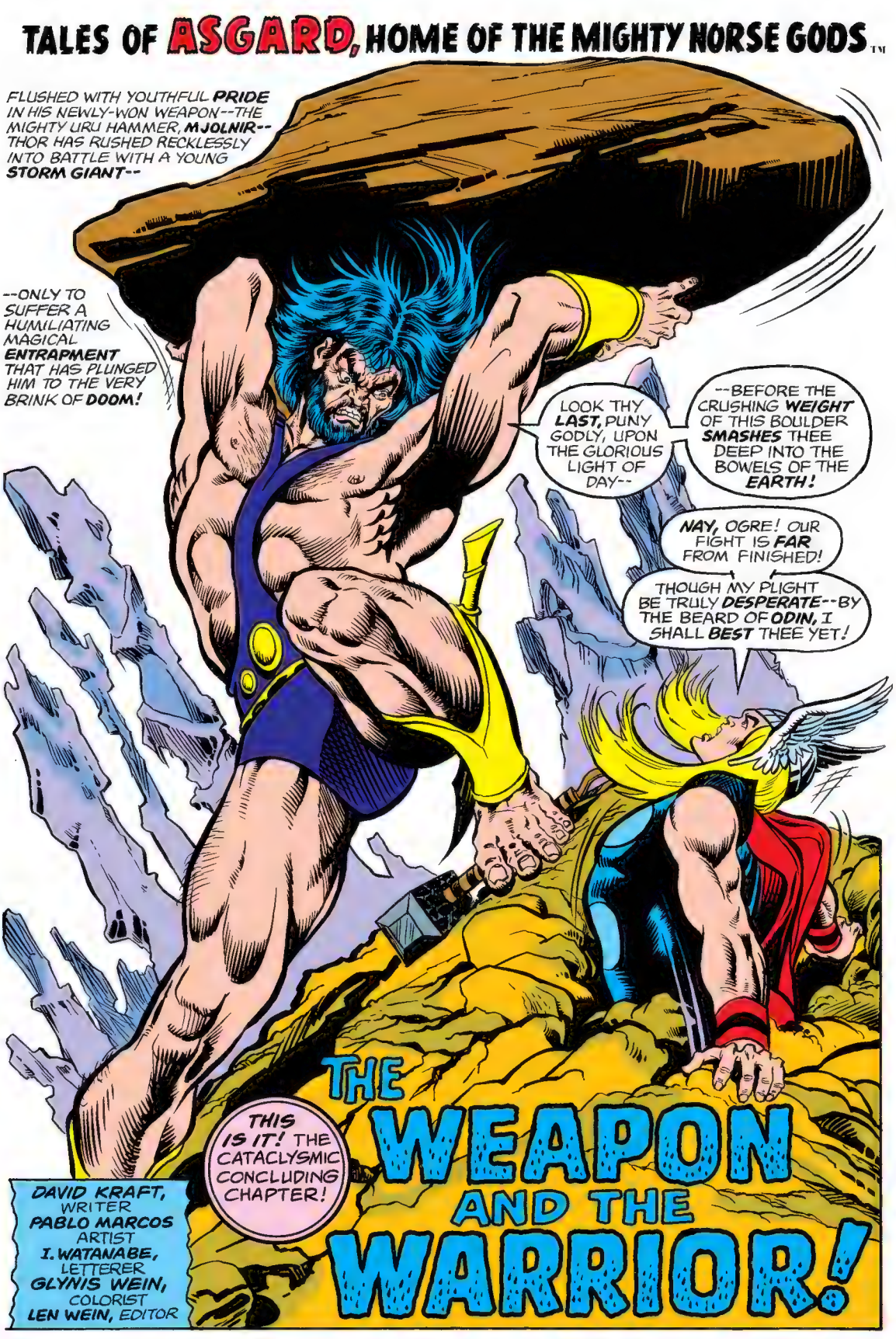
MY ASSAULT IS ALREADY BEGUN, ASGARDIAN!
THE BATTLE IS JOINED--
--AND THE VICTOR SHALL BE-- ULIK!
BROK!

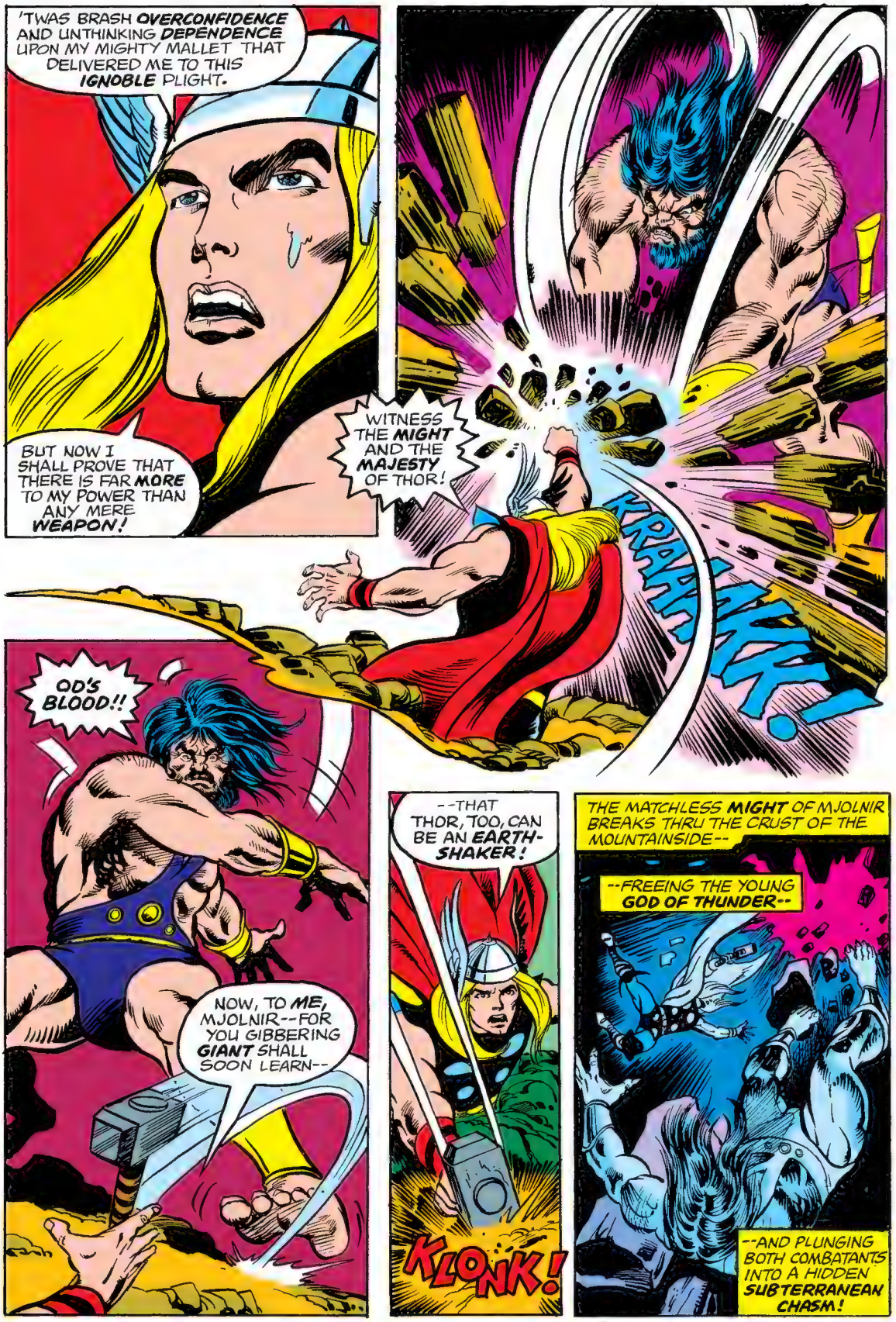
BUT IT APPEARS THAT SUBJECT IS STILL OPEN TO DISPUTE.
FOR, WITH HARDLY A SHRUG, THE THING CALLED TROGG TOSSES ULIK ASIDE--
SKRAKK!
--AND THUS LEAVES HIMSELF UNGUARDED FOR THE THUNDER GOD'S ATTACK!
I KNOW NOT WHAT MANNER OF CREATURE THOU ART, TROGG--
--BUT, IN TRUTH, IT MATTERS LITTLE!
BTOW!
I KNOW ONLY THAT THOU MUST BE DEFEATED IF I AM TO CLAIM THE RUBY EYE WITH IMPUNITY--
PTROK!
--AND THUS, IN ODIN'S NAME-- I STRIKE!
YOUR HAMMER HAS DONE ITS JOB WELL, ASGARDIAN!
NOW LEAVE THE REST TO ULIK!
NAY, TROLL! TOGETHER WE BEGAN THIS BATTLE--
--AND TOGETHER WILL WE RETURN THIS MONSTROUS ONE TO HIS MYSTERIOUS DOMAIN!
SINCE BEFORE THE DAWN OF TIME HAS TROGG DWELT IN DARK-NESS!
BUT NO MORE, LITTLE GNATS-- NO MORE!
NO!!
THAMM!

THE CHOICE IS NOT THINE TO MAKE, MONSTROUS ONE!
THOU CANST NOT BE ALLOWED TO RUN RAMPANT THRU THE KINGDOM OF THE TROLLS--
--AND THEN, MAYHAP, THRU FABLED ASGARD ITSELF!
CURSE YOU, THUNDER GOD--HOLD YOUR GROUND!
THE TOWERING TROGG MUST BE KEPT AT BAY A MOMENT LONGER--
AARRGHH!!!
--UNTIL ULIK IS IN POSITION TO DO--THIS!
TRUNCHEON IN HAND, I FORCE THE GIANT BACK--BACK INTO HIS OWN UNKNOWN WORLD!
NEVER, LITTLE GNAT! TROGG WILL SOON SPLINTER YOUR CRUDE WEAPON--
--AND THEN TROGG WILL SPLINTER YOU!
AYE, TROGG WILL TURN YOUR WORLD TO SMOKING RUINS--BEFORE HE WILL SURRENDER!!
ZOUNDS!
THOU HAST DRIVEN THE UNGAINLY BEHEMOTH BACK TO THE VERY BRINK OF HIS INK-DARK REALM!
QUICKLY, ULIK--THRUST HIM BACK THRU THE YAWNING PORTAL!
DON'T YOU THINK I'M TRYING TO, ASGARDIAN?
THE GIANT'S STRENGTH IS OVERWHELMING!

EVEN I CANNOT HOLD THE GIANT BACK MUCH LONGER, ASGARDIAN!
YOU'LL HAVE TO USE THE RUBY EYE TO SEAL THE PORTAL-- AND USE IT SWIFTLY!
NAY, TROLL! TO SACRIFICE THE RUBY EYE NOW WOULD BE TO CONDEMN THE REALM ETERNAL!
IN THE NAME OF MERCY, ULIK--I CANNOT BETRAY MY PEOPLE'S TRUST IN ME!
YES, YOUR PEOPLE PRIDE THEMSELVES ON THEIR MERCY--DON'T THEY, THOR? THEY CLAIM IT IS THE SINGLE QUALITY THAT SEPERATES THEM FROM THE TROLLS!
USE THE CURSED GEM, THUNDER GOD-- OR, IN TRUTH, YOU ARE NO BETTER THAN ME!
I SAY THEE, TROLL -- ENOUGH!
I'LL HEAR NO MORE!
THOUGH THEE AND THINE STAND FOR ALL THAT IS BASE AND EVIL IN THIS UNIVERSE...
THOUGH THOU HAST OFTEN SOUGHT MY DEATH AND MOCKED ME TO MY FACE...
...STILL WILL I USE THE RUBY EYE TO SAVE THY KINGDOM, ULIK...
...AND MAY ODIN HAVE MERCY ON MY SOUL!
A MOMENT MORE--AND TROGG WILL BE FREE ONCE AGAIN!
A MOMENT MORE--AND NOTHING WILL STOP ME FROM DESTROY-ING YOUR CURSED...

THE EXPLOSION IS INCREDIBLY BRIEF--
KWHOOM!
--BUT UNARGUABLY FINAL!
AND WHEN THE ACRID SMOKE AND SWIRLING DUST AT LAST HAVE CLEARED...
GONE!
THE CREATURE CALLED TROGG HAS VANISHED--ALONG WITH THE GAPING PORTAL THAT GAVE HIM ENTRY TO THIS WORLD!
AYE, ULIK--AND WITH HIM WENT THE RUBY EYE OF THE DRAGON--
--AND MY FINAL HOPE OF FINDING THE LONG-MISSING ODIN!
IT IS NO MORE THAN YOU DESERVE, GODLING! ONLY AN UTTER FOOL SACRIFICES HIS OWN ENDS FOR THE SAKE OF HIS MOST BITTER ENEMY!
THOU DOST DARE SPEAK THUS TO THE GOD OF THUNDER, TROLL?
ASGARD HELP ME, ULIK... BUT THOU SPEAKEST A'RIGHT.
VERILY, WE SHALL MEET AGAIN, BESTIAL ONE...
...AND I SHALL REMEMBER THE LESSON I LEARNED HERE TODAY!
THEN, HEAD BOWED, SHOULDERS SLUMPED IN RESIGNATION, THE PRINCE OF ASGARD TURNS AND DEPARTS THE UNDERGROUND KINGDOM--
--WHILE THE TAUNTING LAUGHTER OF THE ASSEMBLED TROLLS CUTS THRU HIM LIKE A WORN AND RUSTED SWORD!
NEXT ISSUE:
WOULD'JA BELIEVE...
STONE MEN FROM SATURN!


TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS™
FLUSHED WITH YOUTHFUL PRIDE IN HIS NEWLY-WON WEAPON--THE MIGHTY URU HAMMER, MJOLNIR--THOR HAS RUSHED RECKLESSLY INTO BATTLE WITH A YOUNG STORM GIANT--
--ONLY TO SUFFER A HUMILIATING MAGICAL ENTRAPMENT THAT HAS PLUNGED HIM TO THE VERY BRINK OF DOOM!
LOOK THY LAST, PUNY GODLY, UPON THE GLORIOUS LIGHT OF DAY--
--BEFORE THE CRUSHING WEIGHT OF THIS BOULDER SMASHES THEE DEEP INTO THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH!
NAY, OGRE! OUR FIGHT IS FAR FROM FINISHED!
THOUGH MY PLIGHT BE TRULY DESPERATE--BY THE BEARD OF ODIN, I SHALL BEST THEE YET!
THIS IS IT! THE CATACLYSMIC CONCLUDING CHAPTER!
THE WEAPON AND THE WARRIOR!
DAVID KRAFT, WRITER
PABLO MARCOS ARTIST
I. WATANABE, LETTERER
GLYNIS WEIN, COLORIST
LEN WEIN, EDITOR

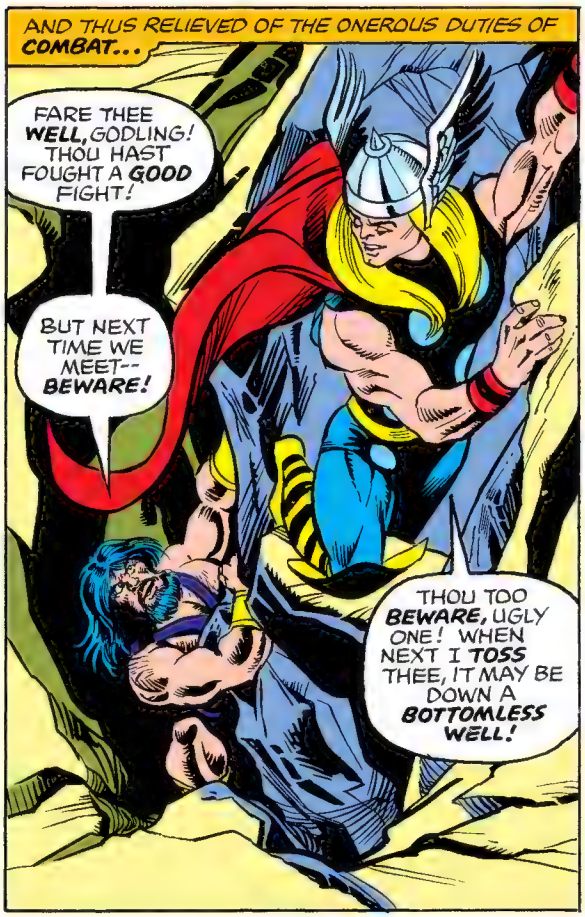

'TWAS BRASH OVERCONFIDENCE AND UNTHINKING DEPENDENCE UPON MY MIGHTY MALLET THAT DELIVERED ME TO THIS IGNOBLE PLIGHT.
BUT NOW I SHALL PROVE THAT THERE IS FAR MORE TO MY POWER THAN ANY MERE WEAPON!
WITNESS THE MIGHT AND THE MAJESTY OF THOR!
KRAKK!
KRAKK!
OD'S BLOOD!!
NOW, TO ME, MJOLNIR--FOR YOU GIBBERING GIANT SHALL SOON LEARN--
--THAT THOR, TOO, CAN BE AN EARTH-SHAKER!
KLONK!
THE MATCHLESS MIGHT OF MJOLNIR BREAKS THRU THE CRUST OF THE MOUNTAINSIDE--
--FREEING THE YOUNG GOD OF THUNDER--
--AND PLUNGING BOTH COMBATANTS INTO A HIDDEN SUBTERRANEAN CHASM!

PUNY GODLING, THY NOISOME CHATTER SHALL SOON CEASE-- WHEN MY BARE HANDS MEET AROUND THY THROAT!
BY THE COLD COILS OF NIDHOGG, DARK GNAWER OF YGGDRASIL! THERE IS MURDER IN HIS EYES!
WORDS ARE ONE THING, GIANT-- ACTIONS QUITE ANOTHER!
THERE IS MORE TO BATTLE THAN MERE BOASTING, ELSE MY EVIL HALF-BROTHER LOKI WOULD EASILY BE CHAMPION OF ALL ASGARD!
YIELD NOW TO THE GOD OF THUNDER!
THY TONGUE RATTLES IN AN EMPTY HEAD! BUT NOT FOR LONG, BOASTFUL WHELP OF ASG--
NOOO!
SUCH WEIGHTY WORDS THOU DOST UTTER, UGLY ONE!
'TIS TIME TO LET THY THOUGHTS SOAR--!
AT LAST I HAVE TAKEN HIS MEASURE!
'TWAS THE INSTANT HIS FEET LEFT THE GROUND THAT I FELT HIM SUCCUMB TO MY MASTERY!
OF COURSE! 'TIS CLEAR AS THE GLEAMING TOWERS OF ASGARD IN THE CRYSTAL LIGHT OF MORNING!
DID HE NOT CONFESS TO ME EARLIER THAT HE DRAWS HIS STRENGTH FROM THE EARTH ITSELF?*
DAK-KOOM!
*LAST ISSUE. --LEN.
BUT IT APPEARS THAT THOR'S DISCOVERY MAY HAVE COME TOO LATE!
TAKE THAT, BRASH AND OVERCONFIDENT GODLING!
SMOKK

YET EVEN AS HE REELS BEFORE THE GIANT'S AWESOME BLOW...
JUST AS I THOUGHT!
AS HIS FEET LOSE CONTACT WITH THE GROUND, I CAN FEEL HIS COLOSSAL STRENGTH DRAIN AWAY!
AND THUS, HE BECOMES VULNERABLE TO A THUNDER-CLAP FROM MY FIST!
KA-BOM!
THE GIANT'S FIGHTING POWER SURGES ANEW AS HIS HUGE FRAME SOAKS UP STRENGTH FROM THE EARTH--
--WHILE ABOVE, THE YOUTHFUL THUNDER GOD SUMMONS THE SURGING ENERGY OF THE FEARSOME NORTHERN STORMS!
NOW THOU SHALT PAY MOST DEARLY FOR THY TRANSGRESSIONS!
SO, THOU HAST NOT LEARNED THY LESSON YET?!
SOON, THE CAVERN ECHOES AND RESOUNDS WITH THUNDER AS THE HAMMER'S WHIRLWIND STIRS A ROCKY AVALANCHE!
KRAKK
BLANG
KLOPP
PLONK

STILL THE FIERCE YOUNG GIANT REFUSES TO ADMIT DEFEAT... NOR HAS THOR LOST HIS BERSERKER'S THIRST FOR BATTLE--
--THOUGH BOTH HAVE SUFFERED SORELY FROM THE FRAY!
FOR A LONG MOMENT, THE TWO GLARE AT EACH OTHER IN TENSE SILENCE...

...AND THEN, WITHOUT WARNING, THE GIANT SUDDENLY BURSTS INTO BELLOWING LAUGHTER!
THOR LIKEWISE FINDS HIMSELF INFECTED BY THE RIDICULOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION ...AND HE, TOO, ERUPTS IN SAVAGE MIRTH!
ZOUNDS, GODLING-- WE ARE FAIRLY MATCHED! WE COULD GO ON FIGHTING POINTLESSLY FOR DAYS!
AYE! BUT WHY IN THE NAME OF HELA ARE WE TRULY BATTLING?!
HA-HA HA-HA HA-HA-HA


AND THUS RELIEVED OF THE ONEROUS DUTIES OF COMBAT...
FARE THEE WELL, GODLING! THOU HAST FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT!
BUT NEXT TIME WE MEET-- BEWARE!
THOU TOO BEWARE, UGLY ONE! WHEN NEXT I TOSS THEE, IT MAY BE DOWN A BOTTOMLESS WELL!

FOR MANY A LONG YEAR, THE YOUNG GOD OF THUNDER WILL REMEMBER THE LESSON HE HAS LEARNED THIS DAY...
MJOLNIR, MY FRIEND, A WEAPON OF THY MATCHLESS MIGHT IS A TREASURE BEYOND PRICE!
YET NEVER AGAIN WILL I RELY SOLELY ON THEE TO DO MY FIGHTING --WITHOUT LOOKING FIRST TO MY OWN BRAINS AND BRAWN!
FOR WELL AND TRULY HATH THE ALL-FATHER ODIN SAID:
"IT IS THE WARRIOR, NOT THE WEAPON THAT WINS BATTLES!"
THE END

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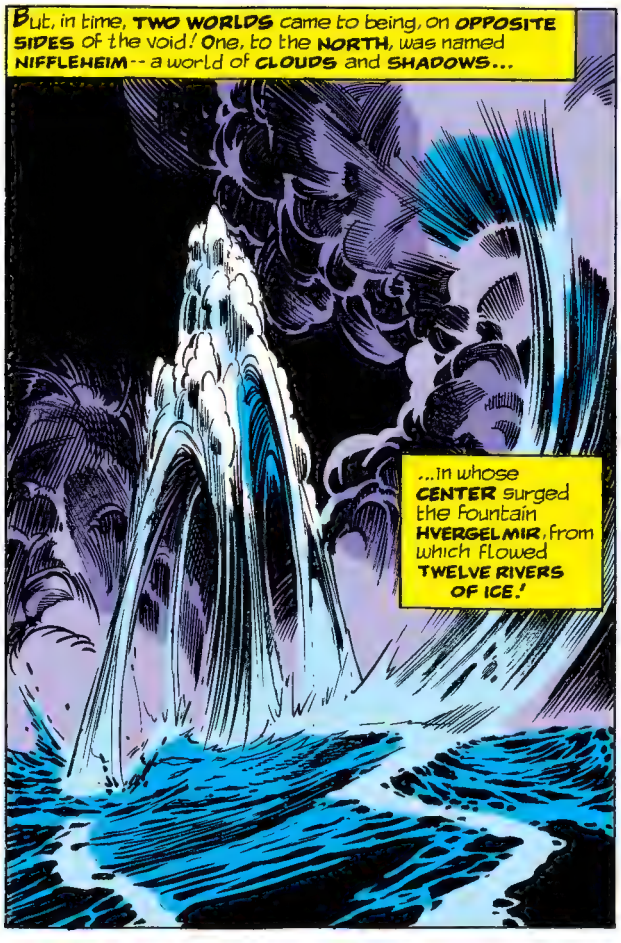
ALL NEW!
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
KING-SIZE ANNUAL!
THE MIGHTY
THOR
TM
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
FOR THE GLORY OF OLYMPUS, THOR MUST DIE!
NAY, HERCULES! THIS DAY SHALL ASGARD TRIUMPH!
WAR OF THE GODS!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

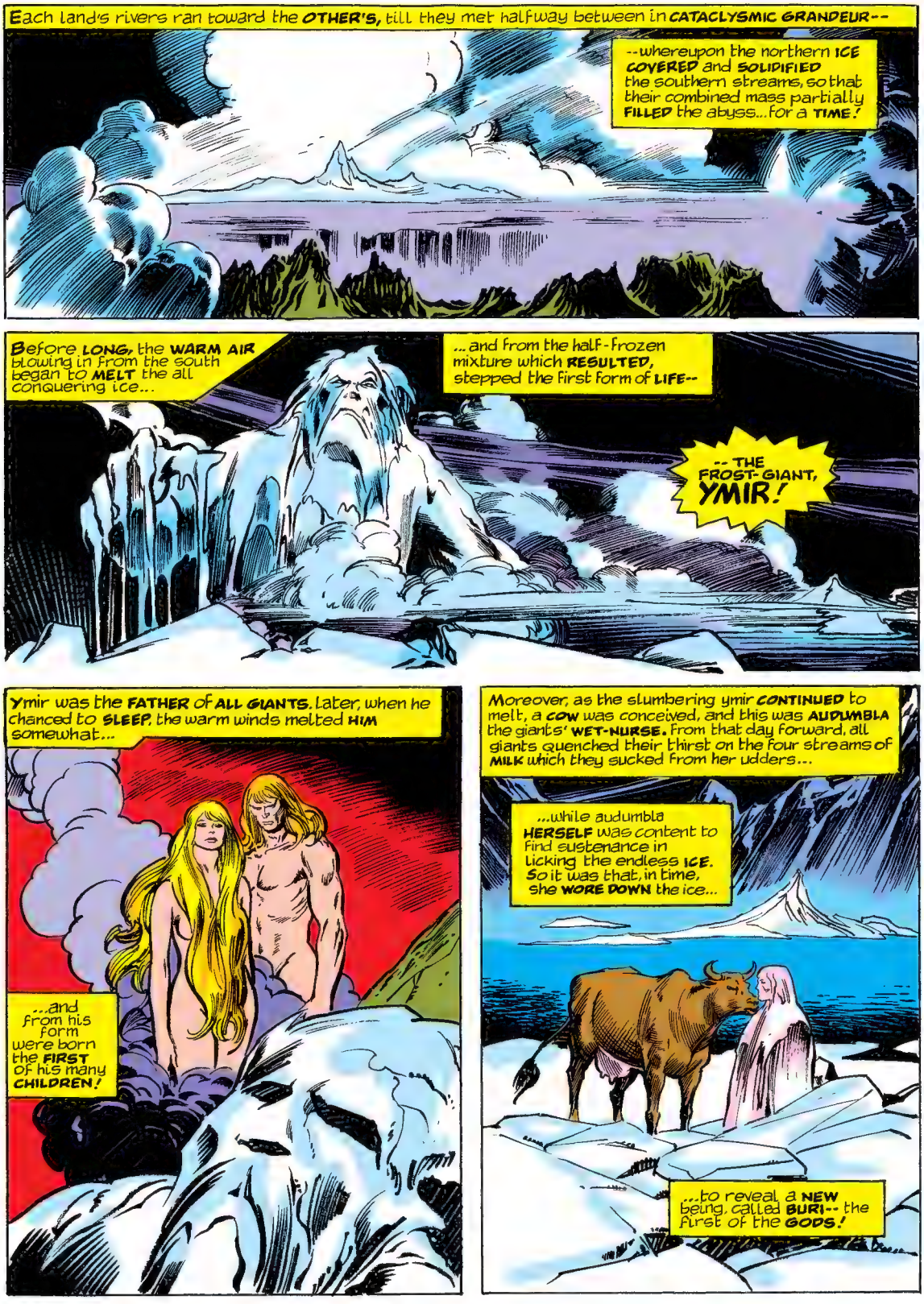
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

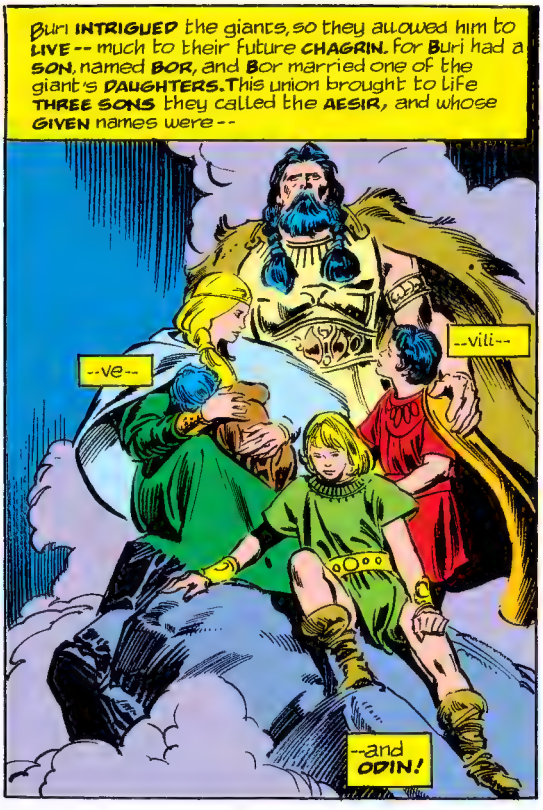
PRESENTING! A NOVEL-LENGTH MELDING OF MYTH, LEGEND, AND SHEER MARVEL WONDERMENT!
WAR OF THE GODS!
A SAGA STIRRINGLY TOLD BY:
STEVE ENGLEHART WRITER
JOHN BUSCEMA & TONY DEZUNIGA ARTISTS
SAN JOSE LETTERER
DON WARFIELD COLORIST
A. GOODWIN EDITOR

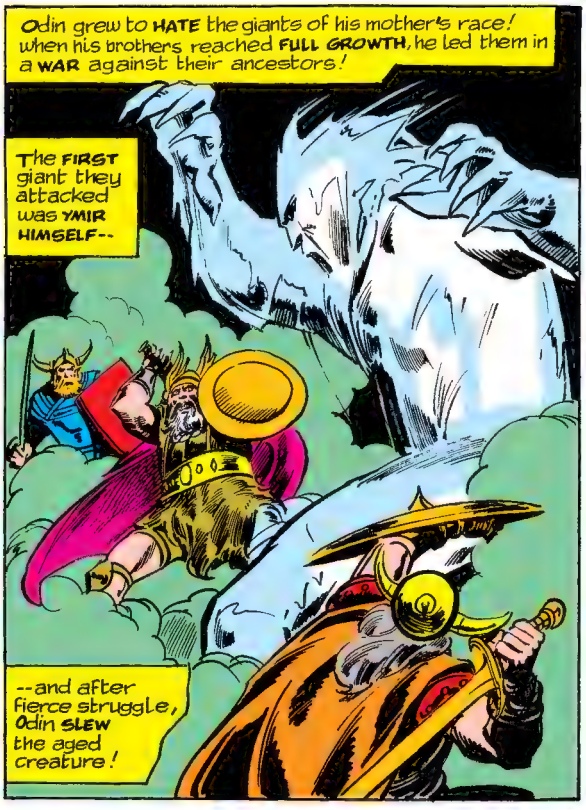
PROLOGUE: DAWN OF THE GODS!

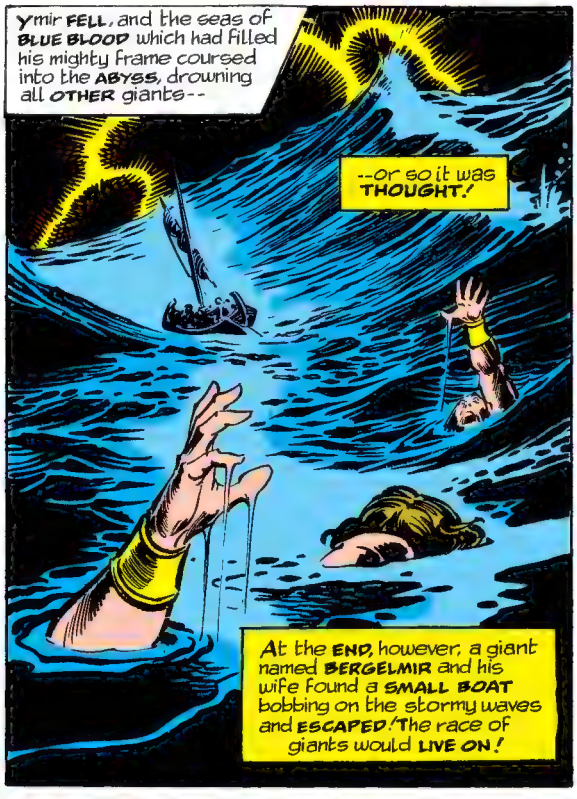

But, in time, TWO WORLDS came to being, on OPPOSITE SIDES of the void! One, to the NORTH, was named NIFFLEHEIM -- a world of CLOUDS and SHADOWS...
...in whose CENTER surged the fountain HVERGELMIR, from which flowed TWELVE RIVERS OF ICE!

On the OTHER side of the gulf, to the SOUTH, lay the land of FIRE, MUSPELSHEIM. It, TOO, teemed with rivers...
...but these were filled with a strange POISON which BURNED all it touched and glowed CHERRY RED in the infinite dark!

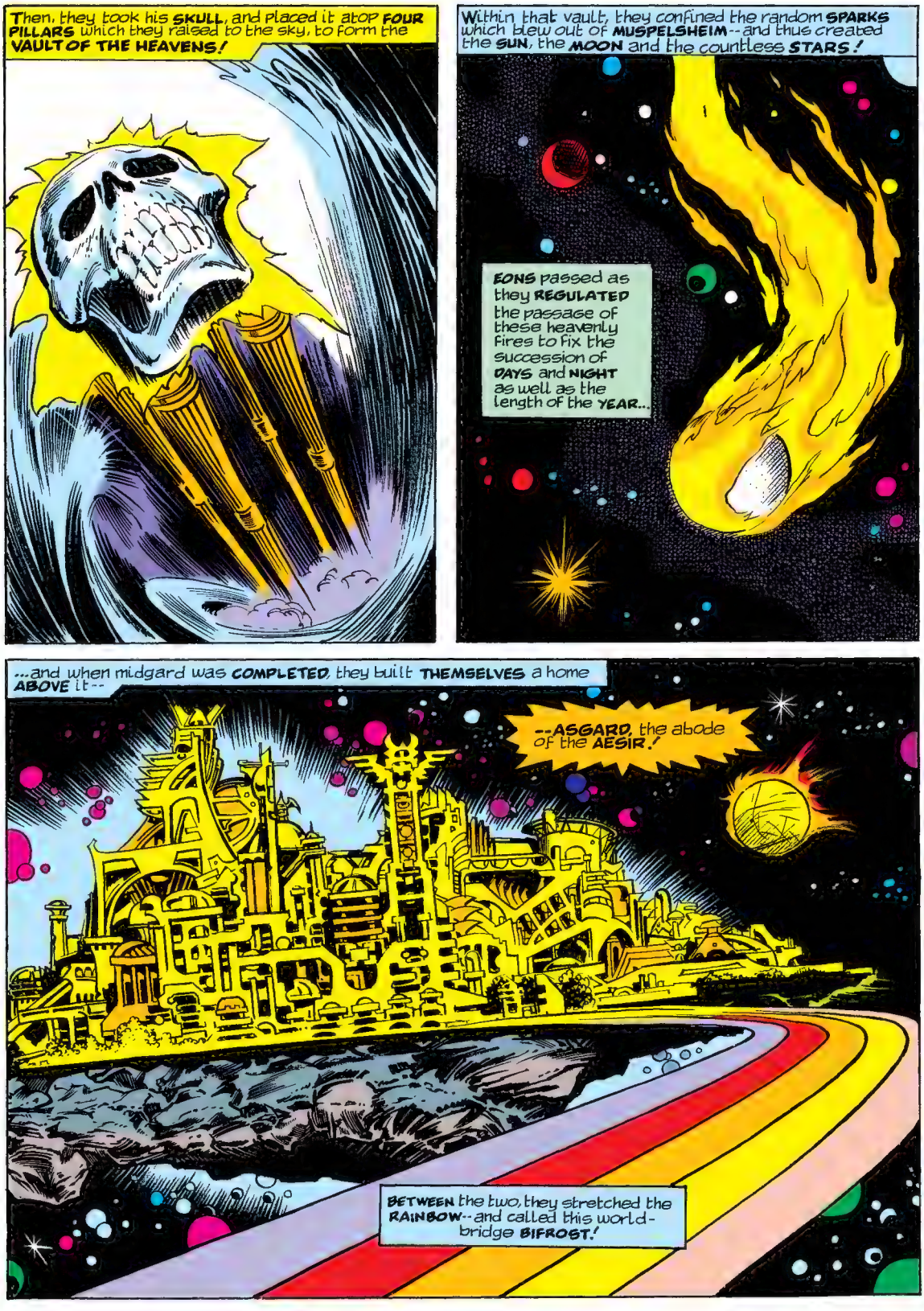

Each land's rivers ran toward the OTHER'S, till they met halfway between in CATACLYSMIC GRANDEUR--
--whereupon the northern ICE COVERED and SOLIDIFIED the southern streams, so that their combined mass partially FILLED the abyss...for a TIME!
Before LONG, the WARM AIR blowing in from the south began to MELT the all conquering ice...
...and from the half-frozen mixture which RESULTED, stepped the first form of LIFE--
-- THE FROST-GIANT, YMIR!
Ymir was the FATHER of ALL GIANTS. Later, when he chanced to SLEEP, the warm winds melted HIM somewhat...
...and from his form were born the FIRST of his many CHILDREN!
Moreover, as the slumbering ymir CONTINUED to melt, a COW was conceived, and this was AUDUMBLA the giants' WET-NURSE. From that day forward, all giants quenched their thirst on the four streams of MILK which they sucked from her udders...
...while audumbla HERSELF was content to find sustenance in licking the endless ICE. So it was that, in time, she WORE DOWN the ice...
...to reveal a NEW being, called BURI-- the first of the GODS!


Buri INTRIGUED the giants, so they allowed him to LIVE -- much to their future CHAGRIN. for Buri had a SON, named BOR, and Bor married one of the giant's DAUGHTERS. This union brought to life THREE SONS they called the AESIR, and whose GIVEN names were --
--ve--
--vili--
--and ODIN!


Odin grew to HATE the giants of his mother's race! when his brothers reached FULL GROWTH, he led them in a WAR against their ancestors!
The FIRST giant they attacked was YMIR HIMSELF--
--and after fierce struggle, Odin SLEW the aged creature!

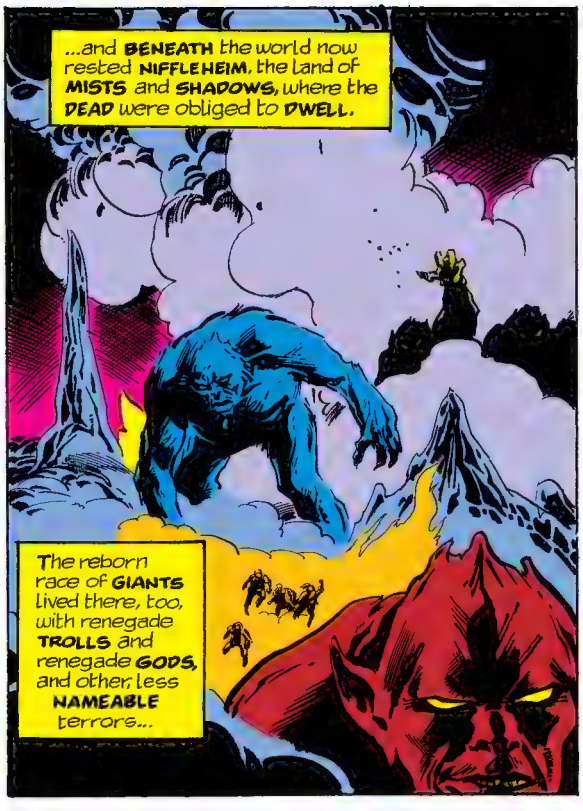

Ymir FELL, and the seas of BLUE BLOOD which had filled his mighty frame coursed into the ABYSS, drowning all OTHER giants--
--or so it was THOUGHT!
At the END, however, a giant named BERGELMIR and his wife found a SMALL BOAT bobbing on the stormy waves and ESCAPED! The race of giants would LIVE ON!

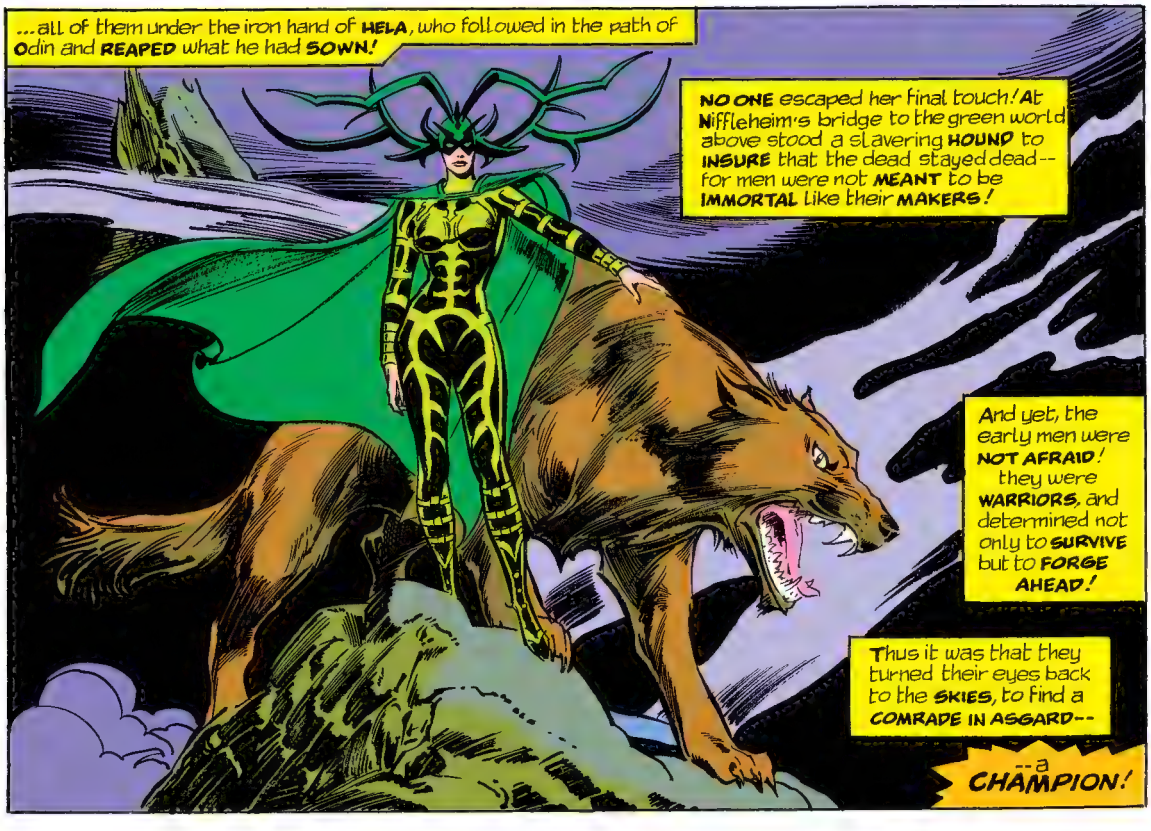
But odin and his brothers knew NOTHING of this, for with YMIR'S death, they turned their thoughts from the DESTRUCTION OF THE OLD to the CREATION OF THE NEW!
They raised the frost-giant's BODY from the SEA, to form a land they called MIDGARD--- the "MIDDLE ABODE" between Niffleheim and Muspelsheim--
--a land WE call the WORLD!
From Ymir's BONES they carved the MOUNTAINS, and from his HAIR, they made the TREES!


Then, they took his SKULL, and placed it atop FOUR PILLARS which they raised to the sky, to form the VAULT OF THE HEAVENS!
Within that vault, they confined the random SPARKS which blew out of MUSPELSHEIM--and thus created the SUN, the MOON and the countless STARS!
EONS passed as they REGULATED the passage of these heavenly fires to fix the succession of DAYS and NIGHT as well as the length of the YEAR...
...and when midgard was COMPLETED, they built THEMSELVES a home ABOVE it--
--ASGARD, the abode of the AESIR!
BETWEEN the two, they stretched the RAINBOW--and called this world-bridge BIFROST!

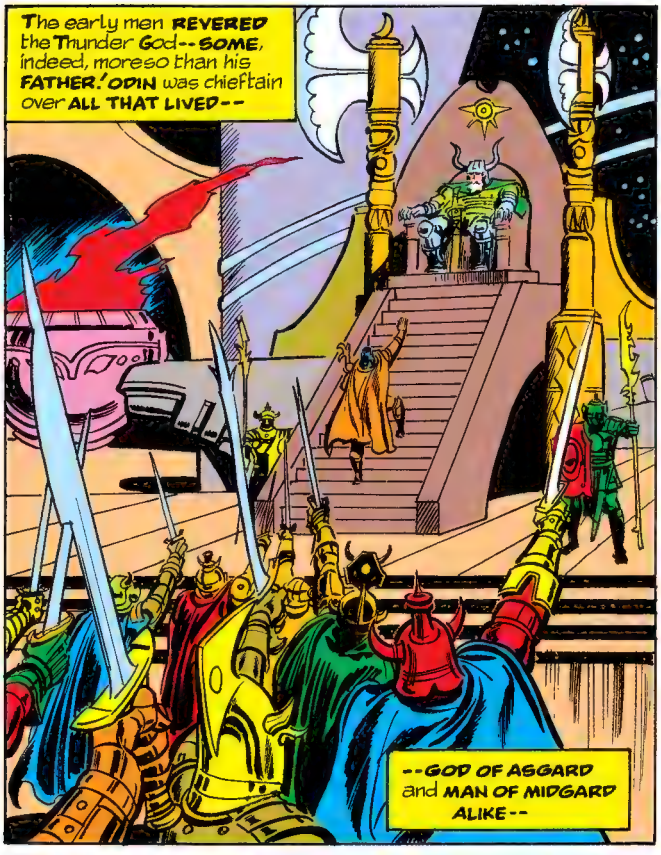
In time, there came to be MANY gods in Asgard, though NONE more powerful than mighty ODIN, whom they named their CHIEFTAIN.
Still, they were not CONTENT. They felt ALONE in the abyss, and longed for OTHER BEINGS like THEMSELVES...
...so they assembled in Odin's GREAT HALL to debate their course of ACTION!
Looking down on MIDGARD, they saw that GRUBS were beginning to form in Ymir's rotting CORPSE...
...and these they made TROLLS, to dwell, like GRUBS, beneath the STONE the giant's body had become!
But this was not ENOUGH.
Still, the SOLUTION to their solitude ELUDED them, until the day Odin and two other Asgardians, HOENIR and LODUR, went RIDING on the MIDGARD PLAINS.
They came upon two TREE TRUNKS...
...and ODIN, in his wisdom, decided to give them BREATH! HOENIR then honored them with SOULS and REASON, while LODUR touched them with WARMTH and the colors of LIFE!
The MAN they called ASKE, and the WOMAN EMBLA -- and they were the FIRST HUMANS!

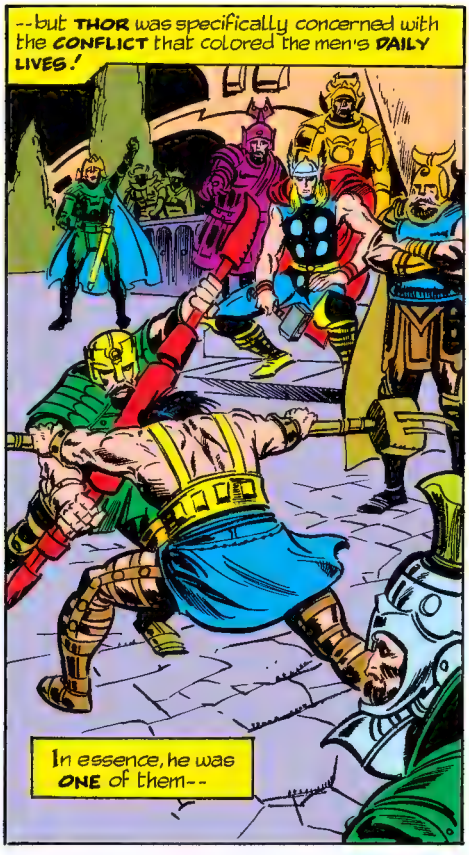
Humans quickly sprang up EVERYWHERE, to FILL the midgard plains-- but they soon saw that they were LESSER than the GODS! In the sea which SURROUNDED the world in the abyss lurked the MIDGARD SERPENT, whose coils were EVER READY to encircle unwary SAILORS...


...and BENEATH the world now rested NIFFLEHEIM, the land of MISTS and SHADOWS, where the DEAD were obliged to DWELL.
The reborn race of GIANTS lived there, too, with renegade TROLLS and renegade GODS, and other less NAMEABLE terrors...

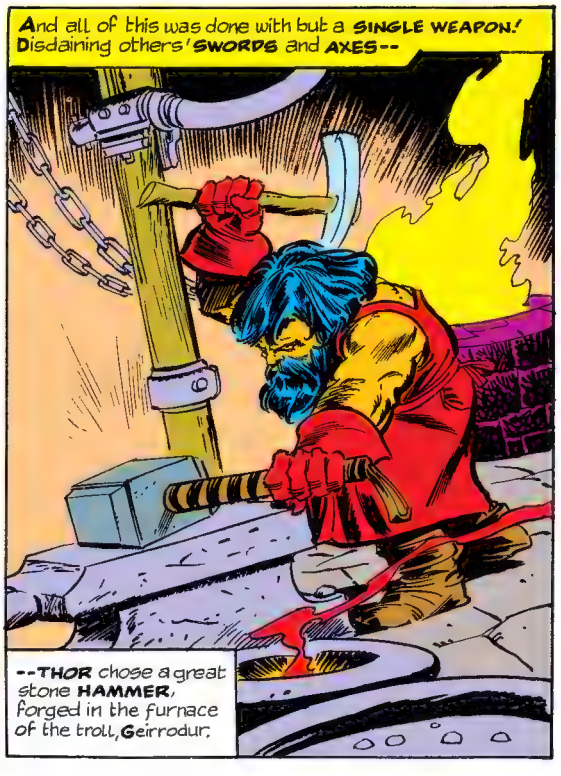

...all of them under the iron hand of HELA, who followed in the path of Odin and REAPED what he had SOWN!
NO ONE escaped her final touch! At Niffleheim's bridge to the green world above stood a slavering HOUND to INSURE that the dead stayed dead-- for men were not MEANT to be IMMORTAL like their MAKERS!
And yet, the early men were NOT AFRAID! they were WARRIORS, and determined not only to SURVIVE but to FORGE AHEAD!
Thus it was that they turned their eyes back to the SKIES, to find a COMRADE IN ASGARD--
--a CHAMPION!

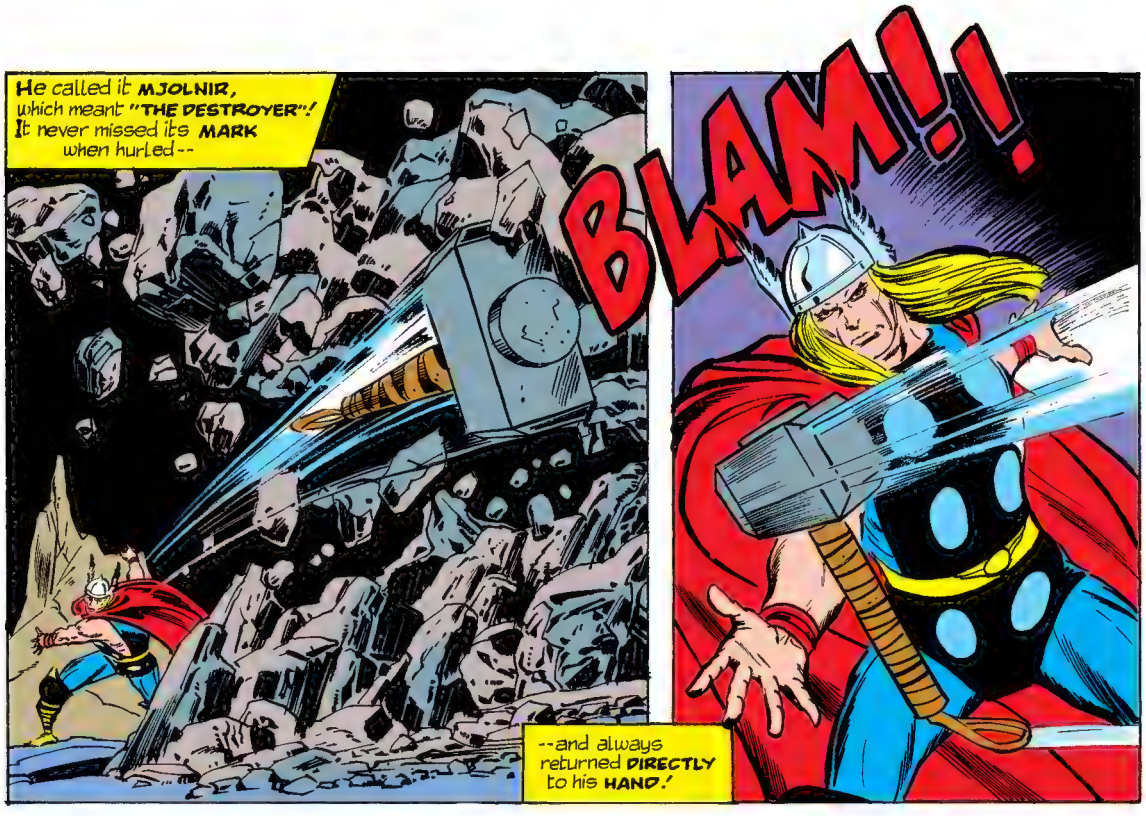
CHAPTER ONE:
THE THUNDER GOD!
Now, AGE had crept upon odin, but in his time, he had fathered MORE than mere MEN.
From his loins had sprung a SON, the god of WIND AND STORM--
-- THE GOD OF THUNDER, THOR!
He was YOUNG then, like the men who WORSHIPPED him! Also, perhaps, a bit HOT-HEADED-- like the men who worshipped him--
--but he was none the less NOBLE, none the less GOOD-- for when all was said and DONE, he was yet PRINCE OF THE REALM!


The early men REVERED the Thunder God--SOME, indeed, moreso than his FATHER! ODIN was chieftain over ALL THAT LIVED--
--GOD OF ASGARD and MAN OF MIDGARD ALIKE--

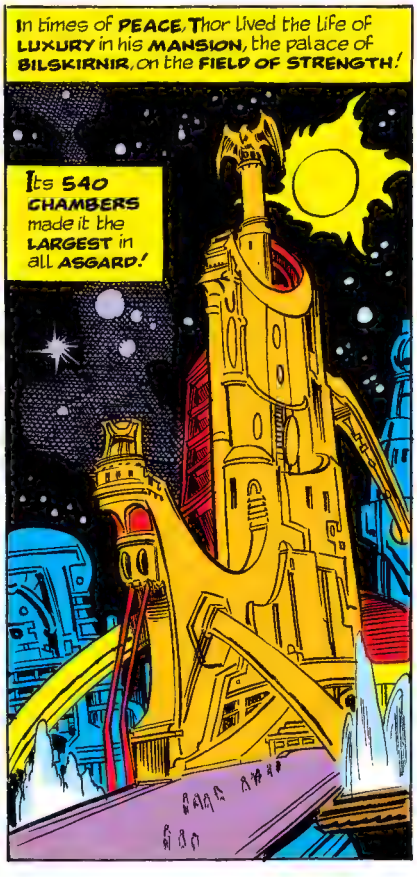

--but THOR was specifically concerned with the CONFLICT that colored the men's DAILY LIVES!
In essence, he was ONE of them--

--and as the YEARS swiftly mounted, his LEGENDS grew ever more GLORIOUS! EVERY midgardian knew of his VALOR in the face of DANGER--
--of his STAMINA, his STRENGTH--his inevitable VICTORY!

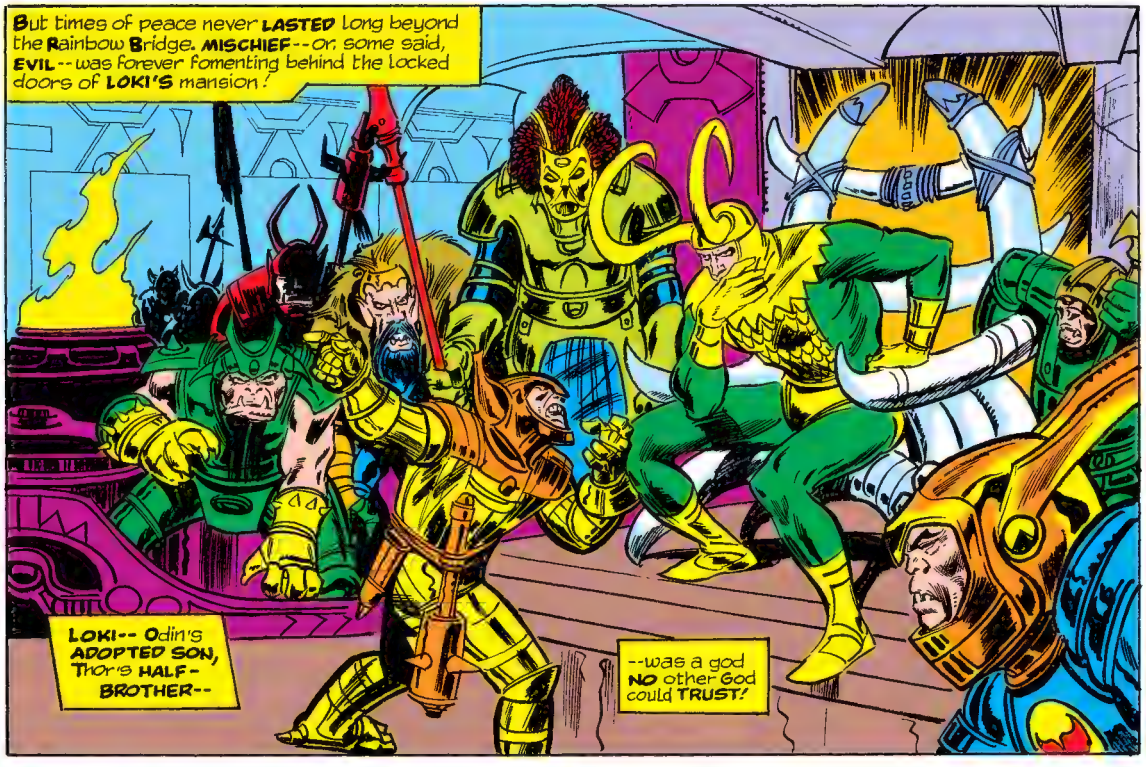

And all of this was done with but a SINGLE WEAPON! Disdaining others' SWORDS and AXES--
--THOR chose a great stone HAMMER, forged in the furnace of the troll, Geirrodur;

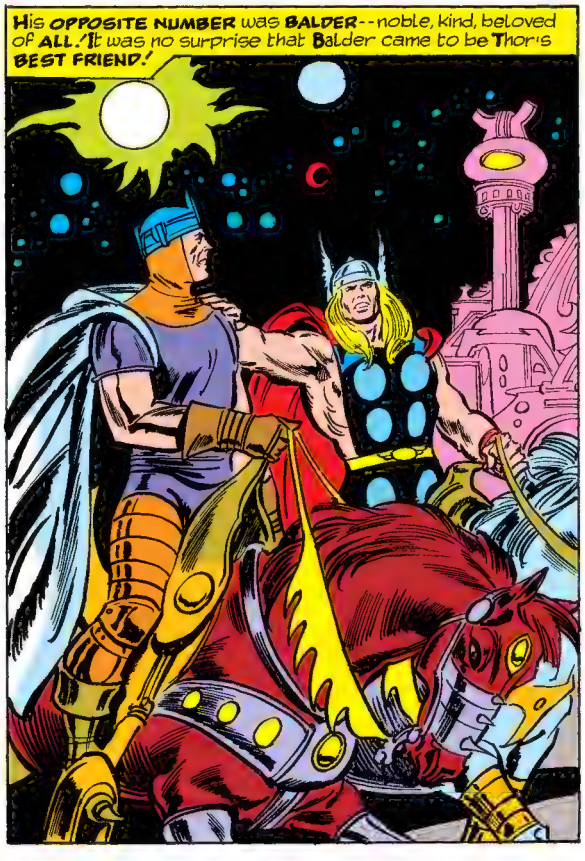

He called it MJOLNIR, which meant "THE DESTROYER"! It never missed its MARK when hurled--
BLAM!!
--and always returned DIRECTLY to his HAND!

Yet war was not the prince's ONLY interest. In times of PEACE, the power of the mystic mallet was used to CONSECRATE TREATIES--
--and more especially, MARRIAGES.

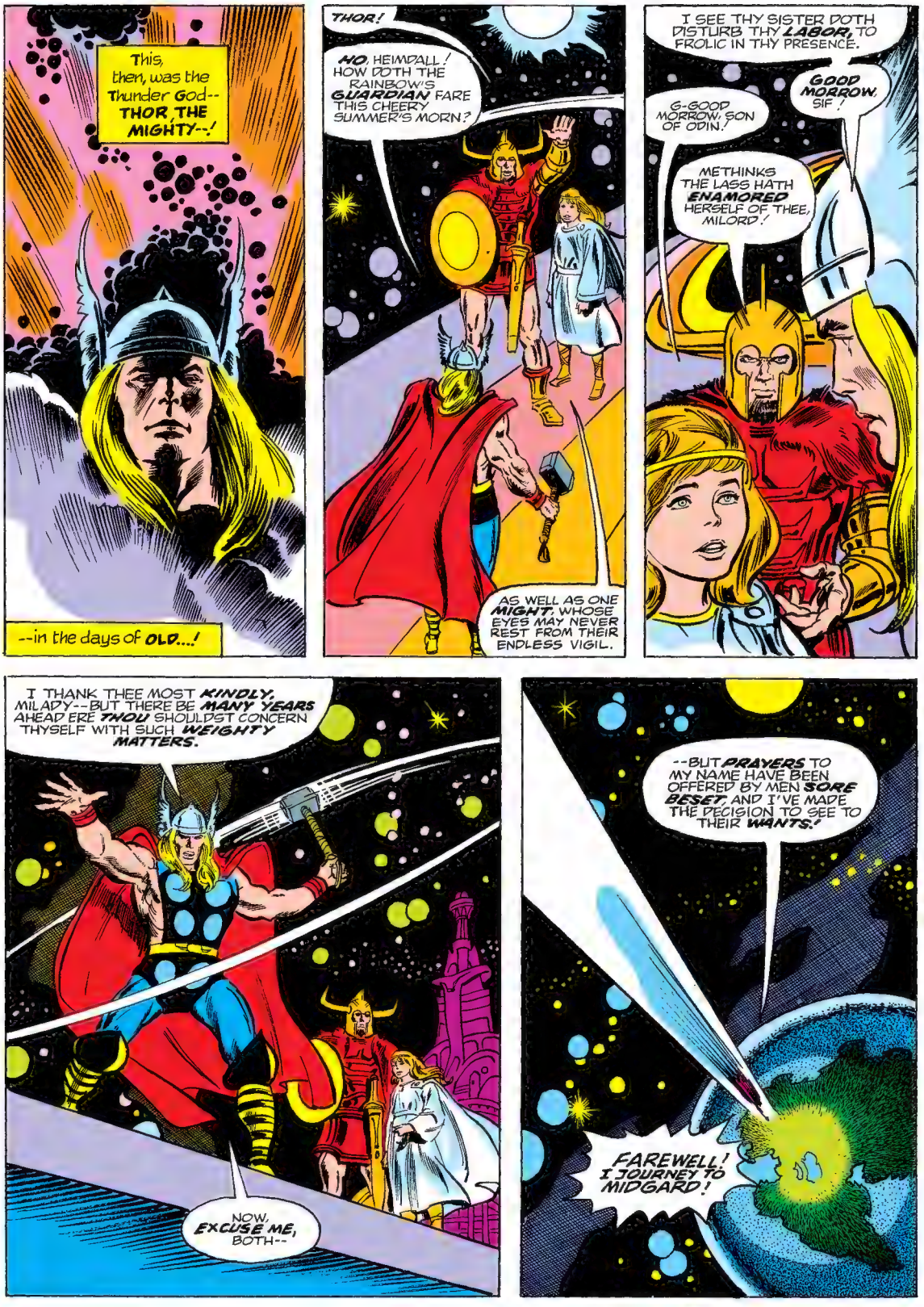

In times of PEACE, Thor lived the life of LUXURY in his MANSION, the palace of BILSKIRNIR, on the FIELD OF STRENGTH!
Its 540 CHAMBERS made it the LARGEST in all ASGARD!

And when times of peace became too STIFLING, he took to the SKIES in his golden CHARIOT--
--drawn without rest by two roaring HE-GOATS!


But times of peace never LASTED long beyond the Rainbow Bridge. MISCHIEF--Or, some said, EVIL--was forever fomenting behind the locked doors of LOKI'S mansion!
LOKI-- Odin's ADOPTED SON, Thor's HALF-BROTHER--
--was a god NO other God could TRUST!



Together with HOGUN THE GRIM, FANDRAL THE DASHING, and the Voluminous VOLSTAGG, they fought MANY a Fine FOE--


This, then, was the Thunder God-- THOR THE MIGHTY--!
--in the days of OLD....!
THOR!
NO, HEIMDALL! HOW DOTH THE RAINBOW'S GUARDIAN FARE THIS CHEERY SUMMER'S MORN?
AS WELL AS ONE MIGHT, WHOSE EYES MAY NEVER REST FROM THEIR ENDLESS VIGIL.
I SEE THY SISTER DOTH DISTURB THY LABOR, TO FROLIC IN THY PRESENCE.
GOOD MORROW, SIF!
G-GOOD MORROW, SON OF ODIN!
METHINKS THE LASS HATH ENAMORED HERSELF OF THEE, MILORD!
I THANK THEE MOST KINDLY, MILADY--BUT THERE BE MANY YEARS AHEAD ERE THOU SHOULDST CONCERN THYSELF WITH SUCH WEIGHTY MATTERS.
NOW, EXCUSE ME, BOTH--
--BUT PRAYERS TO MY NAME HAVE BEEN OFFERED BY MEN SORE BESET, AND I'VE MADE THE DECISION TO SEE TO THEIR WANTS!
FAREWELL! I JOURNEY TO MIDGARD!

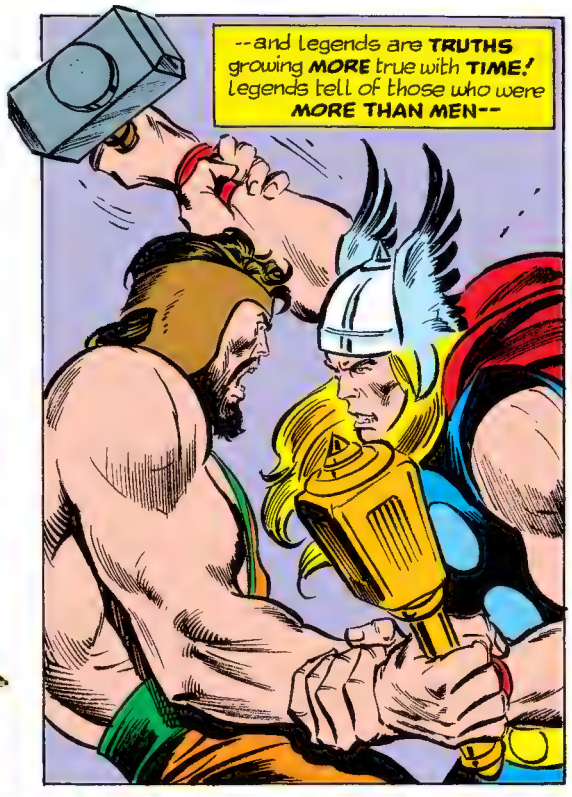
On a dawn-lit field of GLEAMING RED ICE, somewhere near the ARCTIC CIRCLE...
...a STORM-CLOUD seems to swirl to earth, and birth a silent looming FIGURE!
BATTLE-- THE VIKINGS AGAINST SOME UNFAMILIAR FOE!
I SHOULD NOT HAVE DELAYED EVEN TO SPEAK TO HEIMDALL! THESE MEN STAND IN NEED OF AID!
When Thor went into COMBAT his voice did TREMBLE the TREES!
ONWARDS MEN OF MIDGARD!
FOR EVERY VIKING SLAIN, TEN OF THESE SHALL WEEP FOR THEM OUTSIDE VALHALLA'S WALLS!
YET WHO CAN THESE STRANGE MEN BE? I HAVE NEVER SEEN THEIR LIKE!

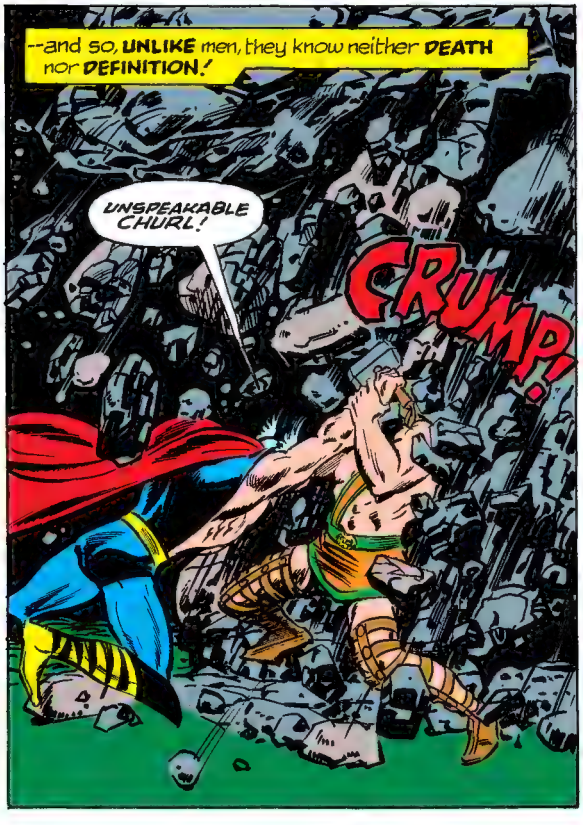
The amazement is MUTUAL, godling! At this selfsame INSTANT, in the frosty cavern used by the invading GENERALS...
MINE EYES DO DECEIVE ME! NEVER HAVE I SEEN SUCH STRENGTH SAVE ON THE ISLES!
ERE ALL IS LOST, WE MUST CALL UPON OUR CHAMPION--
--HERCULES THE MAGNIFICENT!
WHAT DO YOU WISH, MEN OF GREECE?
Swiftly, the startling tale is told--
--and two minutes LATER, a meeting destined to CHANGE THE UNIVERSE takes place beneath the AURORA BOREALIS!
HOLD, LONGHAIR!
NO LONGER SHALT THOU WAGE WAR UPON MY PEOPLE!
ART THOU MAD, FELLOW? A PRINCE OF ASGARD IS NO GOATHERD TO BE ORDERED ABOUT BY FOOLISH MEN!

CALL ME "MAN," WILT THOU? THOUGH TRUE IT IS THAT MY MOTHER WAS MORTAL--
--MY FATHER WAS ZEUS, LORD OF ILLUSTRIOUS OLYMPUS-- AND HERCULES SHALL NOT BE MOCKED!
AYE, THOU ART MAD--TO SEEK MY RESPECT WITH PRATTLE OF NAMES UNKNOWN TO ME!
HAVE AT THEE, NORTHMAN!
CLANG!
LET THY WORDS MAKE THINE EPITAPH!

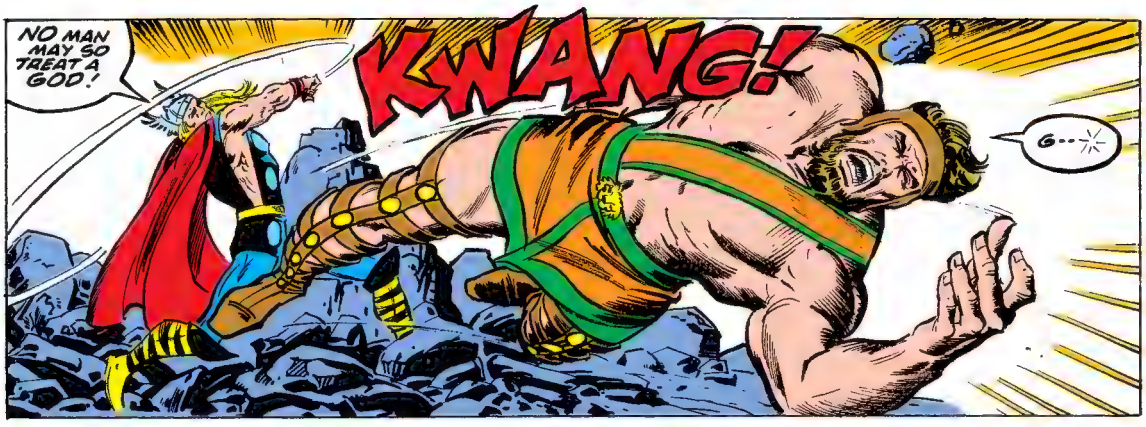
Some say this meeting took place **OTHERWISE**, at **OTHER TIMES**--but who among us knows for certain **NOW**?

The glory of **THOR**-- the might of **HERCULES**--these have been writ with the lyrics of **LEGEND**--

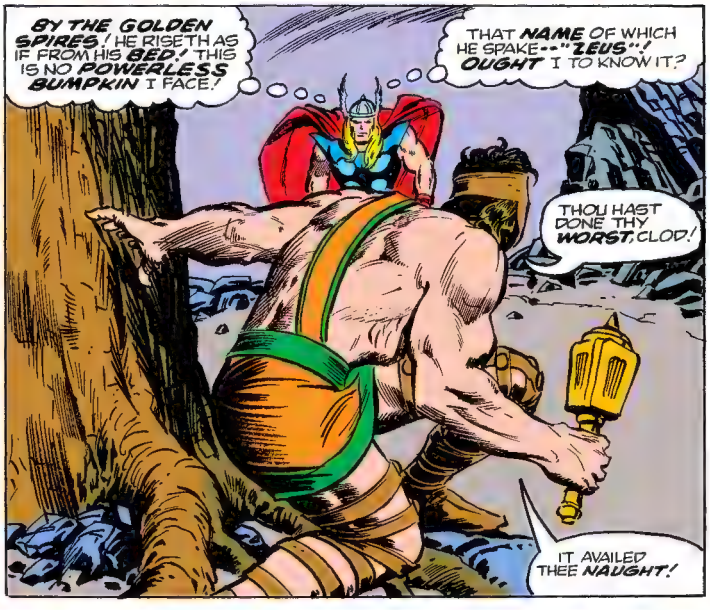




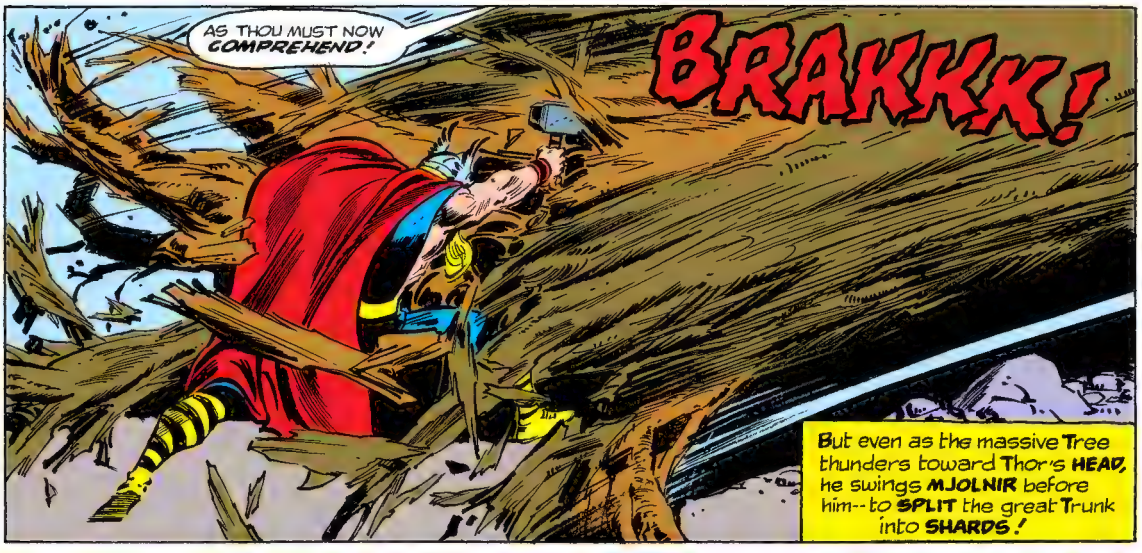
TO ATTACK **THOR** THE MIGHTY IS TO MEET THY DOOM!
BAR-ROOM!
ODIN'S BLOOD! WHAT HAVE WE HERE **UNLEASHED**?
REMAIN TO SEEK THE ANSWER IF THOU **WHILST** NORTHMAN!
A **WISE** MAN SEEKETH **SHELTER**!

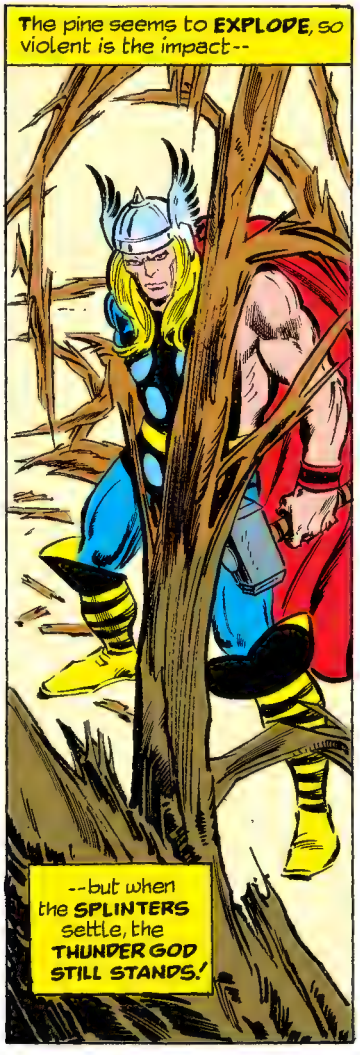

NO MAN MAY SO TREAT A GOD!
KWANG!
G--

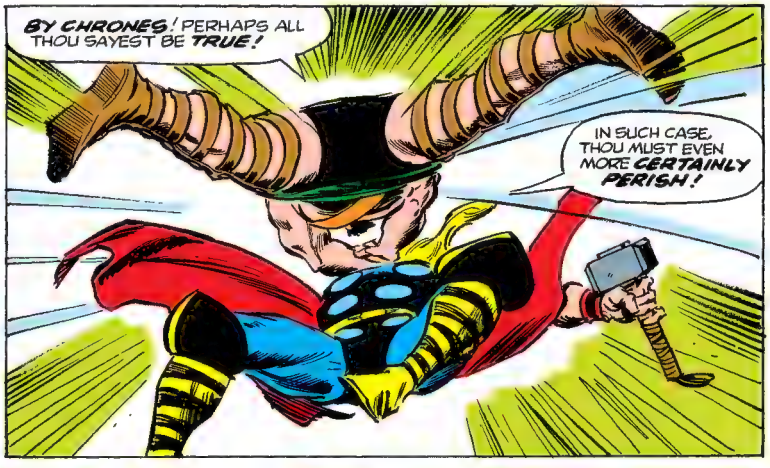
Hurtling HEAD OVER HEELS, Hercules spins TWICE AROUND before crashing HAPHAZARDLY into a towering PINE!
KRAKH!

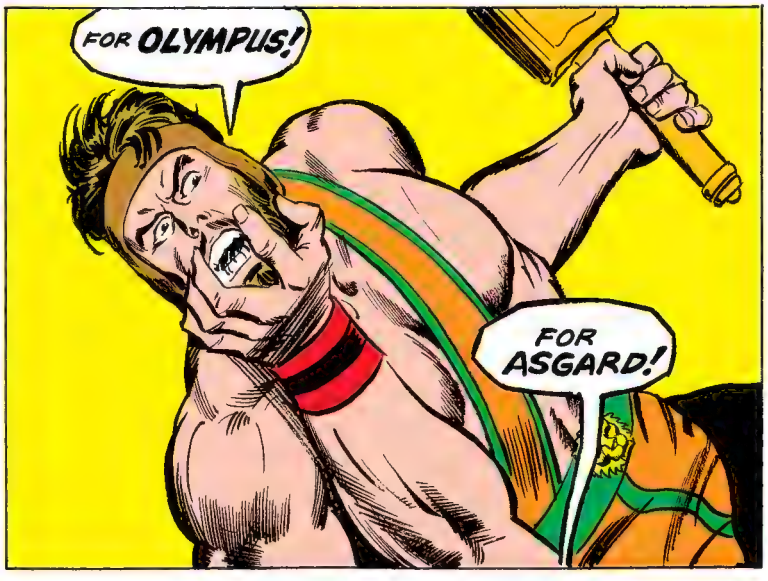

BY THE GOLDEN SPIRES! HE RISETH AS IF FROM HIS BED! THIS IS NO POWERLESS BUMPKIN I FACE!
THAT NAME OF WHICH HE SPAKE--"ZEUS"! OUGHT I TO KNOW IT?
THOU HAST DONE THY WORST, CLOD!
IT AVAILED THEE NAUGHT!

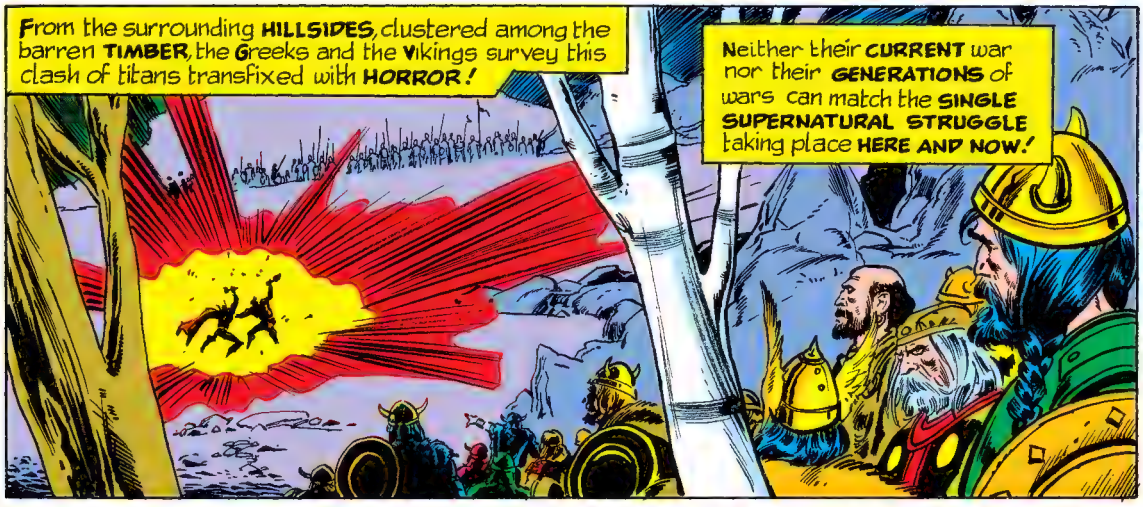
AND THOU CALLEST THYSELF A GOD! PFAUGH!
RRROP!
NE'ER HAST THOU CROSSED MY SIGHT ERE THIS, AND HERCULES IS NO STRANGER ON OLYMPUS--

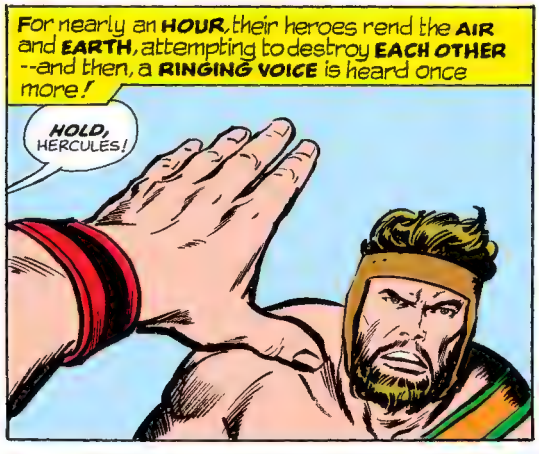

AS THOU MUST NOW COMPREHEND!
BRAKKK!
But even as the massive Tree thunders toward Thor's HEAD, he swings MJOLNIR before him--to SPLIT the great Trunk into SHARDS!

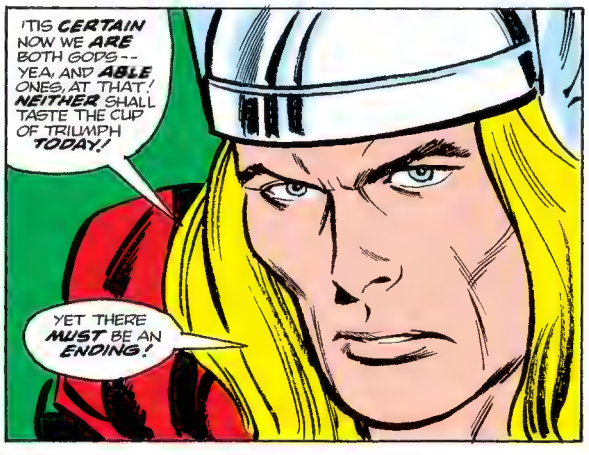

The pine seems to EXPLODE, so violent is the impact--
--but when the SPLINTERS settle, the THUNDER GOD STILL STANDS!


BY CHRONES! PERHAPS ALL THOU SAYEST BE TRUE!
IN SUCH CASE, THOU MUST EVEN MORE CERTAINLY PERISH!


FOR OLYMPUS!
FOR ASGARD!

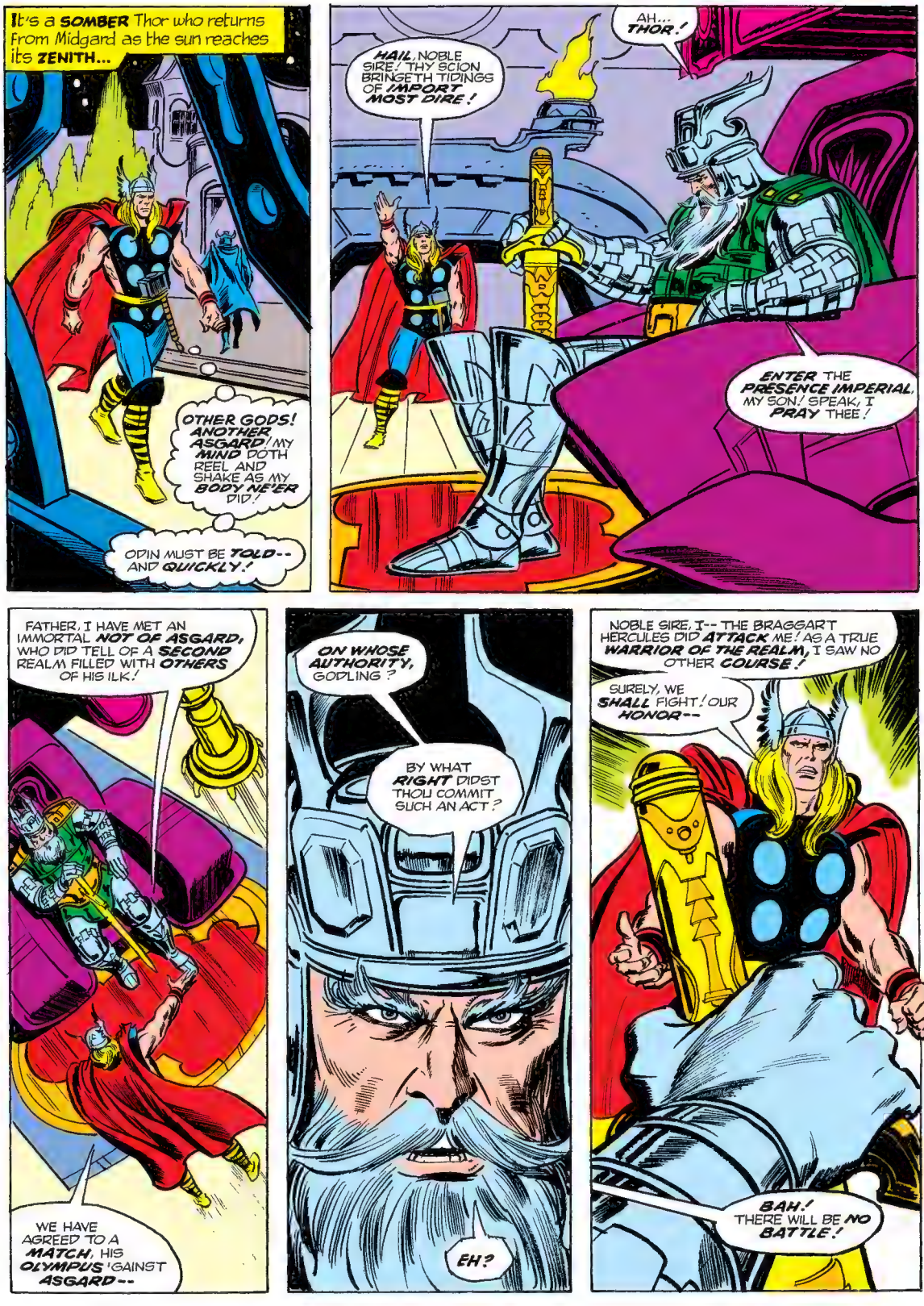

From the surrounding HILLSIDES, clustered among the barren TIMBER, the Greeks and the Vikings survey this clash of titans transfixed with HORROR!
Neither their CURRENT war nor their GENERATIONS of wars can match the SINGLE SUPERNATURAL STRUGGLE taking place HERE AND NOW!

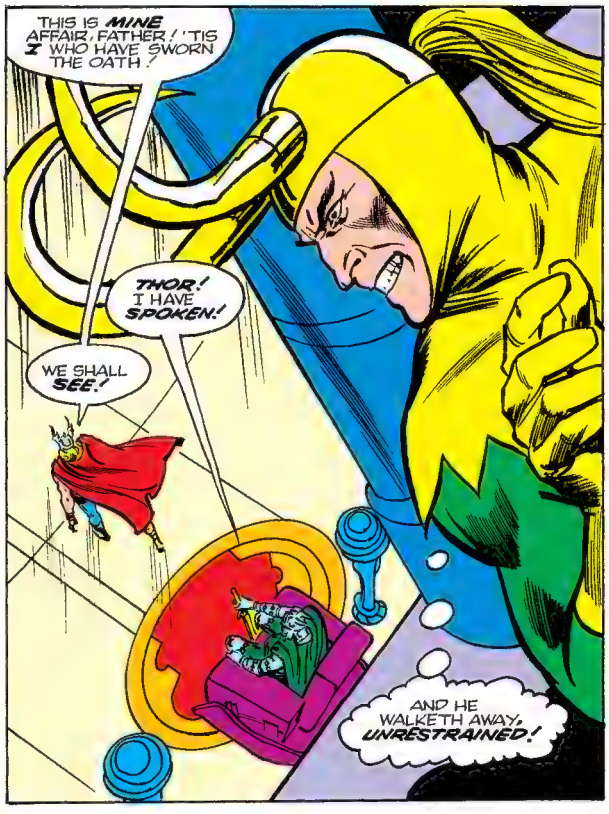

For nearly an HOUR, their heroes rend the AIR and EARTH, attempting to destroy EACH OTHER --and then, a RINGING VOICE is heard once more!
HOLD, HERCULES!

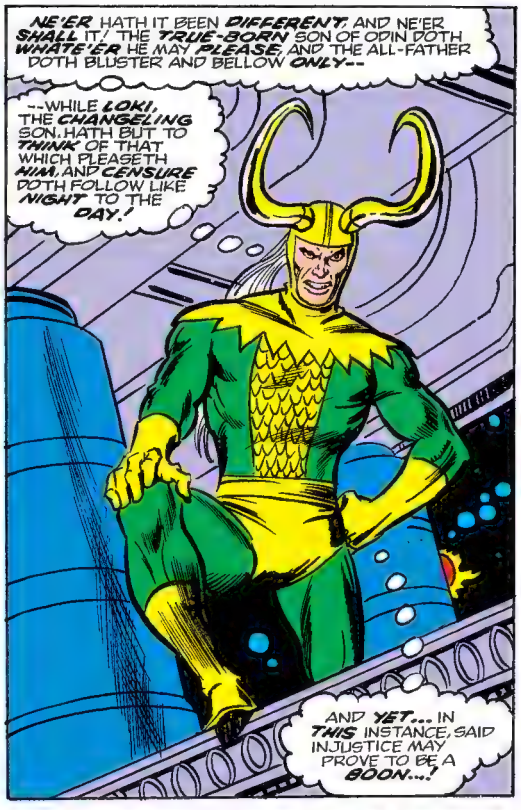

'TIS CERTAIN NOW WE ARE BOTH GODS -- YEA, AND ABLE ONES, AT THAT! NEITHER SHALL TASTE THE CUP OF TRIUMPH TODAY!
YET THERE MUST BE AN ENDING!

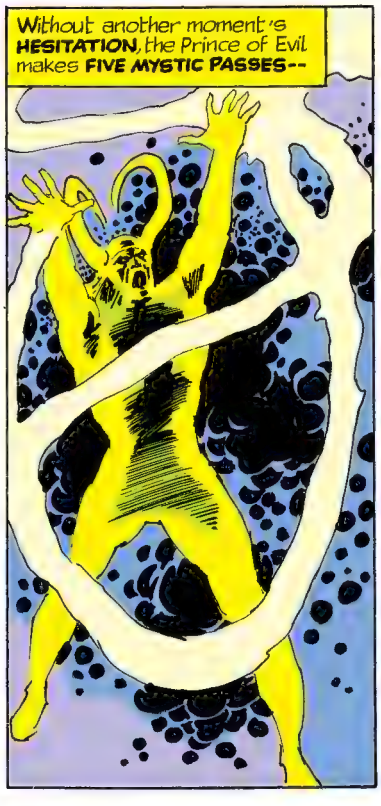
IF IT BE AGREED, I SAY WE MEET AGAIN, ONE WEEK HENCE, WHEN OUR FELLOW GODS MAY DO BATTLE AT OUR SIDES--
--THUS TO DETERMINE THE TRUE WORTH OF EACH REALM!
MEANTIMES OUR PEOPLE SHALL REFRAIN FROM THEIR CONFLICT! AGREED?

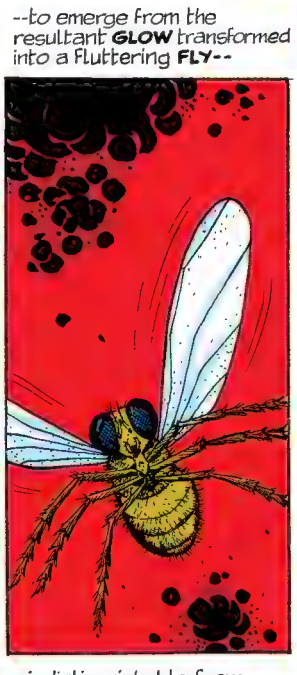
AGREED! GET YE HENCE, MEN OF THE ISLE--
--YET REST ASSURED THAT IN SEVEN SHORT DAYS, YOUR HONOR SHALL REMAIN UNTARNISHED --AS SHALL THAT OF HIGH OLYMPUS!
GO!

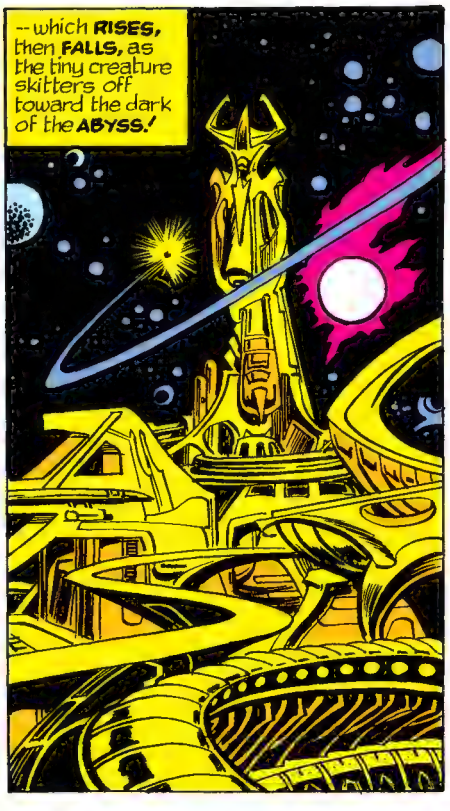

It's a SOMBER Thor who returns from Midgard as the sun reaches its ZENITH...
OTHER GODS! ANOTHER ASGARD! MY MIND DOTH REEL AND SHAKE AS MY BODY NE'ER DID!
ODIN MUST BE TOLD-- AND QUICKLY!
HAIL, NOBLE SIRE! THY SCION BRINGETH TIDINGS OF IMPORT MOST DIRE!
AH... THOR!
ENTER THE PRESENCE IMPERIAL, MY SON! SPEAK, I PRAY THEE!
FATHER, I HAVE MET AN IMMORTAL NOT OF ASGARD, WHO DID TELL OF A SECOND REALM FILLED WITH OTHERS OF HIS ILK!
WE HAVE AGREED TO A MATCH, HIS OLYMPUS 'GAINST ASGARD--
ON WHOSE AUTHORITY, GODLING?
BY WHAT RIGHT DIDST THOU COMMIT SUCH AN ACT?
EH?
NOBLE SIRE, I-- THE BRAGGART HERCULES DID ATTACK ME! AS A TRUE WARRIOR OF THE REALM, I SAW NO OTHER COURSE!
SURELY, WE SHALL FIGHT! OUR HONOR--
BAH! THERE WILL BE NO BATTLE!

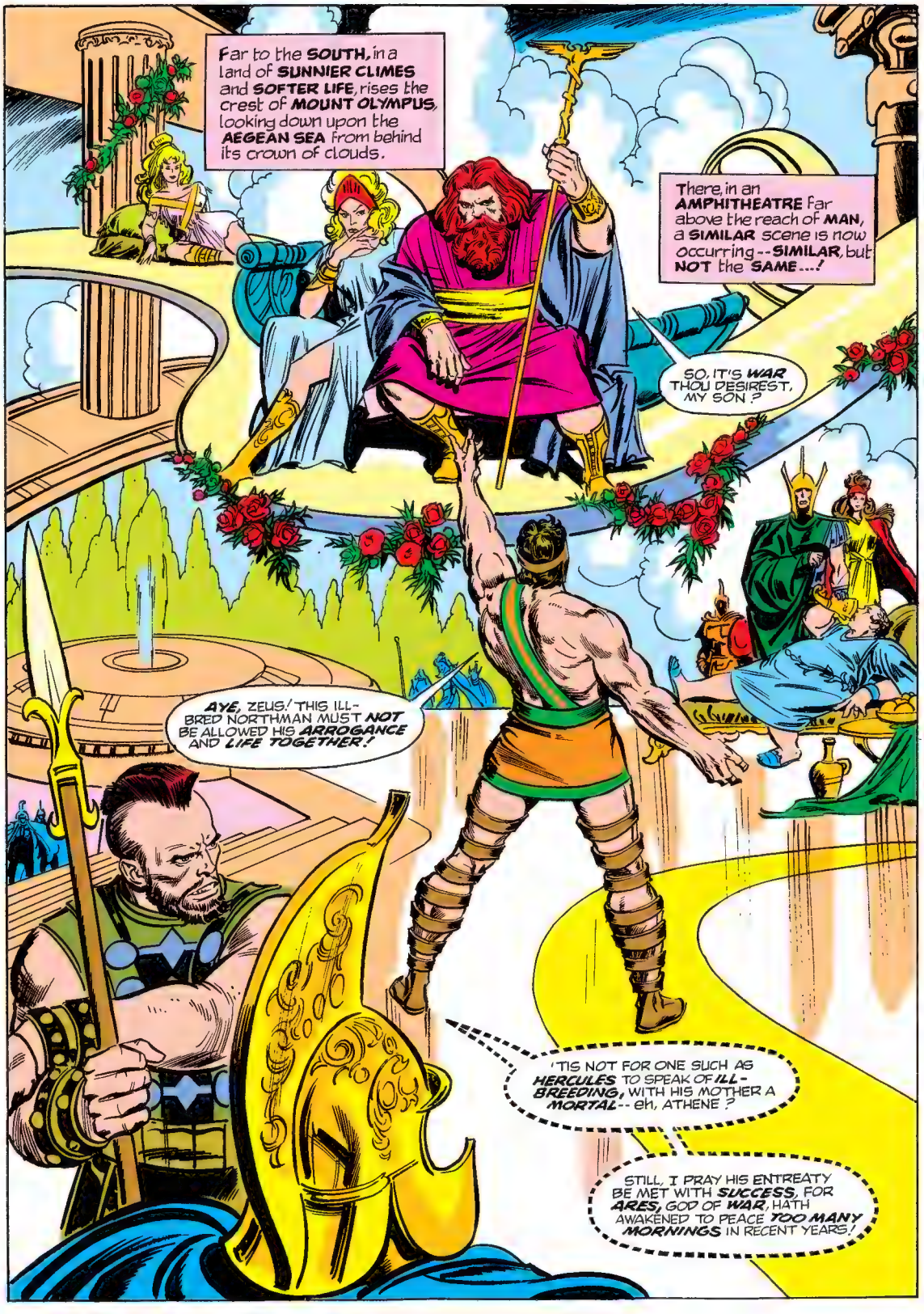

THIS IS MINE AFFAIR, FATHER! 'TIS I WHO HAVE SWORN THE OATH!
THOR! I HAVE SPOKEN!
WE SHALL SEE!
AND HE WALKETH AWAY, UNRESTRAINED!


NE'ER HATH IT BEEN DIFFERENT, AND NE'ER SHALL IT, THE TRUE-BORN SON OF ODIN DOTH WHATE'ER HE MAY PLEASE, AND THE ALL-FATHER DOTH BLUSTER AND BELLOW ONLY--
--WHILE LOKI, THE CHANGELING SON, HATH BUT TO THINK OF THAT WHICH PLEASETH HIM, AND CENSURE DOTH FOLLOW LIKE NIGHT TO THE DAY!
AND YET... IN THIS INSTANCE, SAID INJUSTICE MAY PROVE TO BE A BOON...!


Without another moment's HESITATION, the Prince of Evil makes FIVE MYSTIC PASSES--


--to emerge from the resultant GLOW transformed into a Fluttering FLY--
--indistinguishable from all OTHERS, save for a rather SINISTER sound to his BUZZ--


--which RISES, then FALLS, as the tiny creature skitters off toward the dark of the ABYSS!


Far to the SOUTH, in a land of SUNNIER CLIMES and SOFTER LIFE, rises the crest of MOUNT OLYMPUS, looking down upon the AEGEAN SEA from behind its crown of clouds.
There, in an AMPHITHEATRE far above the reach of MAN, a SIMILAR scene is now occurring -- SIMILAR, but NOT the SAME...!
SO, IT'S WAR THOU DESIREST, MY SON?
AYE, ZEUS/ THIS ILL-BRED NORTHMAN MUST NOT BE ALLOWED HIS ARROGANCE AND LIFE TOGETHER!
'TIS NOT FOR ONE SUCH AS HERCULES TO SPEAK OF ILL-BREEDING, WITH HIS MOTHER A MORTAL -- eh, ATHENE?
STILL, I PRAY HIS ENTREATY BE MET WITH SUCCESS, FOR ARES, GOD OF WAR, HATH AWAKENED TO PEACE TOO MANY MORNINGS IN RECENT YEARS!

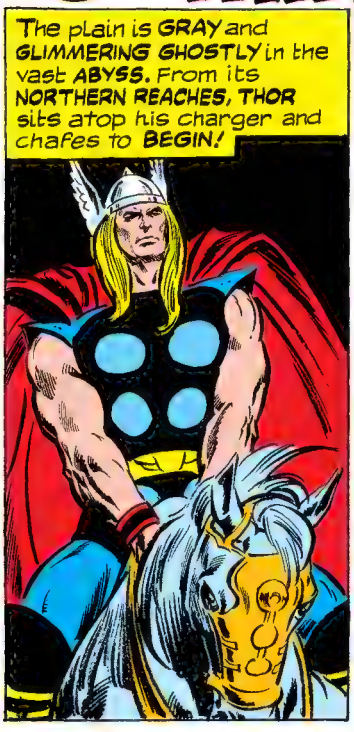
SAY BUT THE WORD, MY FATHER, AND ASGARD SHALL TROUBLE US NO LONGER!
DOTH IT TROUBLE US -- OR THEE, HERCULES --
--THIS REALM OF WHICH NO OTHER OLYMPIAN HATH E'ER HEARD?
SPOKEN LIKE THE MASTER I DID MARRY, SUPREME ONE! LET THIS UNFORTUNATE RESULT OF EARLIER ESCAPADES RETURN TO THE MORTAL WORLD UNFULFILLED --
-- THAT THY PRESENT UNION WITH ME MAY CONTINUE TO PROSPER!
SCHEMING FEMALE! THY HATRED FOR HERCULES BE WELL-KNOWN AND OFT-NOTED, HERA!
NOBLE ZEUS SHOULD DECIDE THE ISSUE ON ITS MERITS ALONE--MERITS WHICH, TO ME, APPEAR MORE THAN SUBSTANTIAL!
BUT WHERE BE THE PROFIT IN CONFLICT, ARES? WE HAVE OTHER, BETTER CONCERNS!
APOLLO DOTH NOT LIE! THIS IS NOT THE WAY OF PROUD OLYMPUS!
ARTEMIS STANDETH AGAINST!
AS DOTH HERMES!
HEPHAESTUS, SIRE! WE WISH TO ADVANCE THE ESTATE OF MAN, NOT RETARD IT!
I AM SORRY, MY SON! MY WILL AND FATE BE ONE AND THE SAME, AND THE SIGNS MOST CLEARLY POINT TOWARD PEACE AT THIS TIME!
With an ugly SCOWL, Hercules TURNS AWAY.

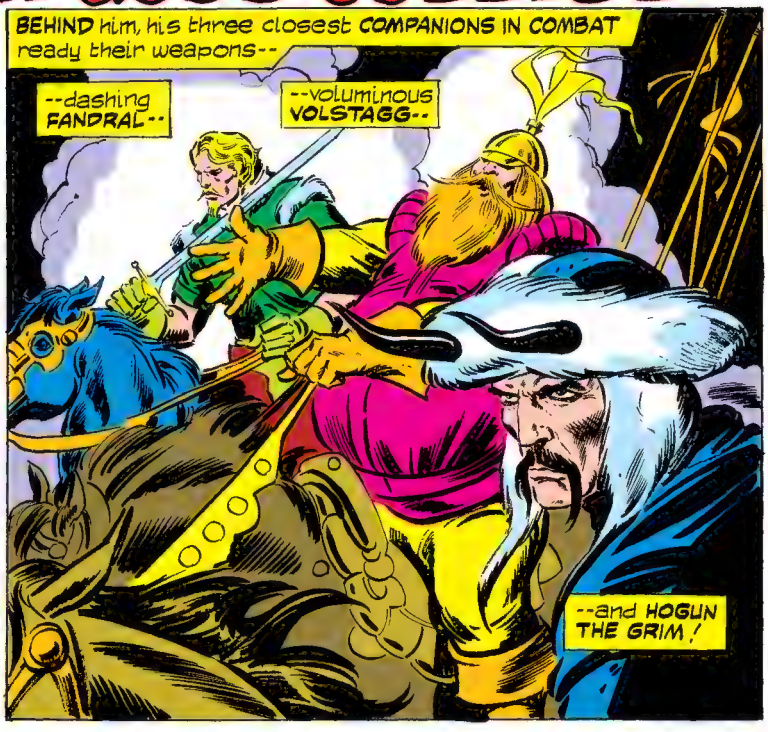
There, matters might falter to an INCONCLUSIVE END...
...except for a FLY high above.
In the few seconds since its ARRIVAL, it has heard and understood ALL! Now, SWIFTLY and UNSEEN, it drops to vast hall's FLOOR--
--and blossoms with a NEWER form EQUALLY ILLUSORY!
THOR!
AYE, BUFFOON! I COULD NOT BEAR TO WAIT THE WEEK--
PTOK!
--ERE STRIKING THINE UGLY FACE AGAIN!
THOU DIDST TAKE HIM UNAWARES, FROM BEHIND!
WHAT OF IT, DECREPIT ONE? I BUT ACCORD HIM THE RESPECT I WOULD GIVE ANY OLYMPIAN!
HOLD THY TONGUE, ASGARDIAN--SO I MIGHT RIP IT FROM THINE INSOLENT MOUTH!
SAY ON, HERCULES! THOU AND I SHALL---
HA-HA-HA-HA-HA! FAREWELL, FOOLS!
BY HADES! HE DOTH VANISH!

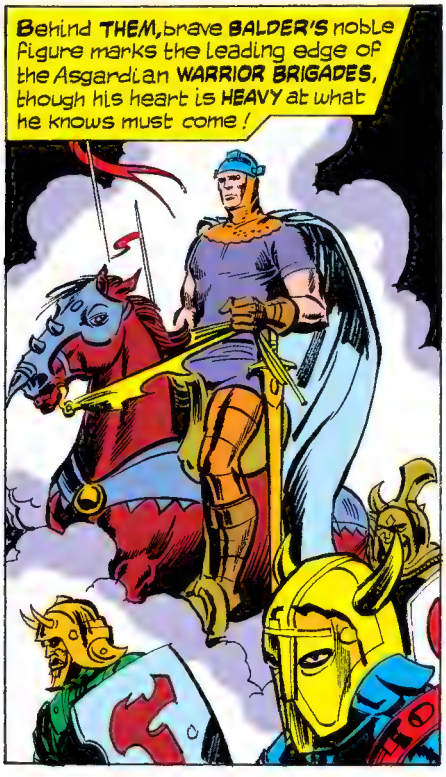
HE BE GONE-- BUT THE INSULTS LINGER, VILE AND VICIOUS! NOW, NOBLE FATHER, WE MUST MEET THIS THREAT!
WE SHALL ACCEPT NO LESS, ZEUS!
EVEN I AM OBLIGED TO CONCUR, HUSBAND! WHATE'ER MY THOUGHTS OF THINE OFFSPRING, THIS ASGARDIAN IS WORSE!
I NEED NO CONVINCING, HERA! BY MY SOLEMN DECREE--
LET THERE BE--
--WAR!

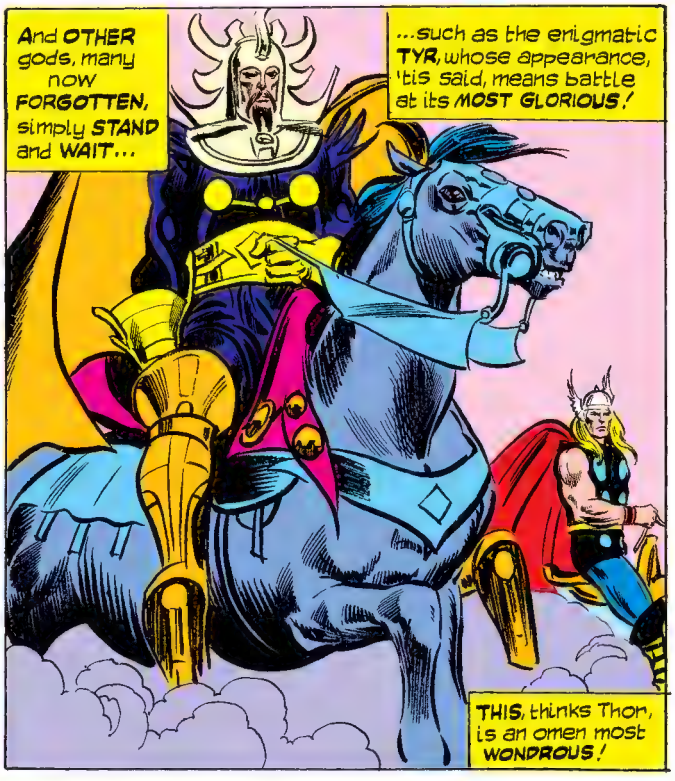
CHAPTER TWO:

WHEN GODS COLLIDE!


The plain is GRAY and GLIMMERING GHOSTLY in the vast ABYSS. From its NORTHERN REACHES, THOR sits atop his charger and chafes to BEGIN!


BEHIND him, his three closest COMPANIONS IN COMBAT ready their weapons--
--dashing FANDRAL--
--voluminous VOLSTAGG--
--and HOGUN THE GRIM!


Behind THEM, brave BALDER'S noble figure marks the leading edge of the Asgardian WARRIOR BRIGADES, though his heart is HEAVY at what he knows must come!


And OTHER gods, many now FORGOTTEN, simply STAND and WAIT...
...such as the enigmatic TYR, whose appearance, 'tis said, means battle at its MOST GLORIOUS!
THIS, thinks Thor, is an omen most WONDROUS!

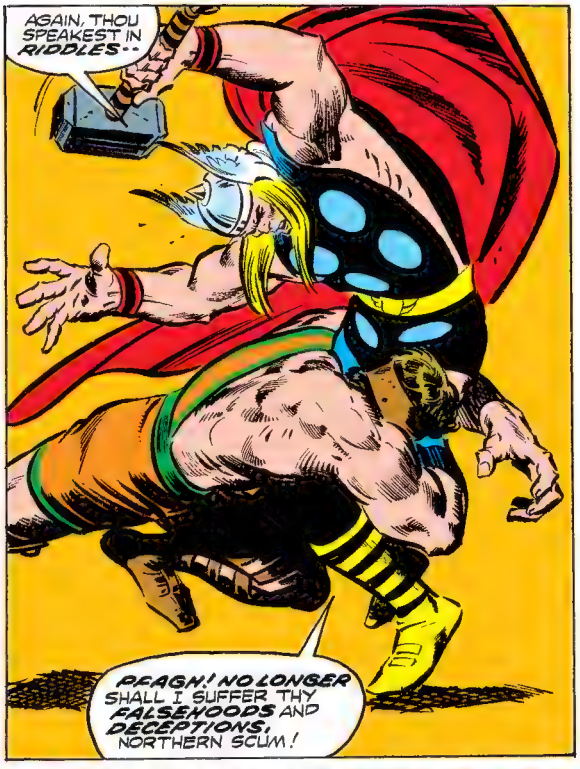
But the OLYMPIANS, for THEIR part, are NO LESS well-represented. There is NOTHING more terrible than gods of PEACE when roused to ANGER, and their TWIN CHIEFTAINS, HERCULES and ARES have NEVER been known to FAIL!
Now, ARES is READY! Now he BELLOWS FORTH his ORDERS!
Now, the SOUTHERNERS begin to roll FORWARD--
--AND THE BATTLE IS JOINED!
ONWARD, ASGARDIANS! WE'LL SHOW THEM WHAT IT MEANS TO MOCK OUR GLORY--
--AYE, AND WE'LL SHOW THE ALL-FATHER, AS WELL!

ONWARD!

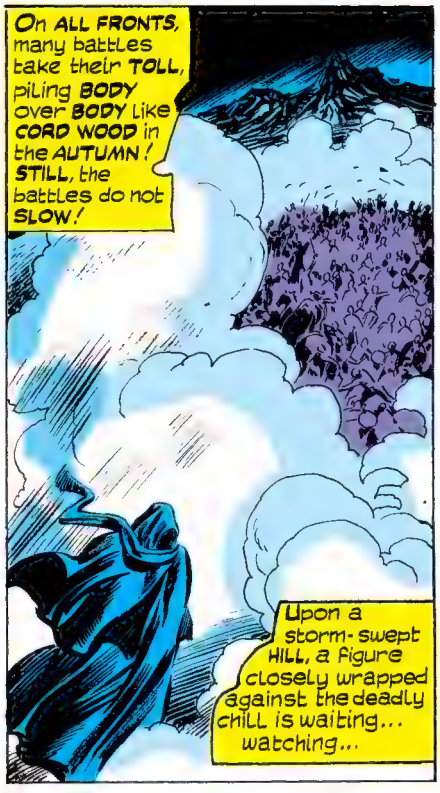
Even THEN, men knew the meaning of "ONE PICTURE'S WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS!

But words shall add to the TEXTURE!
THERE RIDETH AN UNWARY VICTIM, RIPE TO FEEL HIS BRAINS BURST BENEATH THE HARD-DRIVEN BROAD-AXE OF ARES!
NAY, CHURL! THOU DOST BOAST A BREATH TOO SOON!
ZOUNDS! HE DID HURL HIS HORSE INTO THE PATH OF MINE!
I STAND FOR PEACE, OLYMPIAN, BUT I'LL NOT LIE DOWN FOR DEATH!
I KNOW THY VISAGE NOT--
--BUT THOU ART SURELY THE GOD OF WAR!
BAH! THOU COULDST BE ONE OF MY MILK-SOP ALLIES!
BY THE THREE-HEADED SERPENT OF THRACE! THESE SOUTHERNERS BE ENDLESS!
AYE, HOGUN! LOVELY, EH?
OH, THAT MY STALLION'S PRANCING SHOULD NOT DISTRACT MY AIM SO!

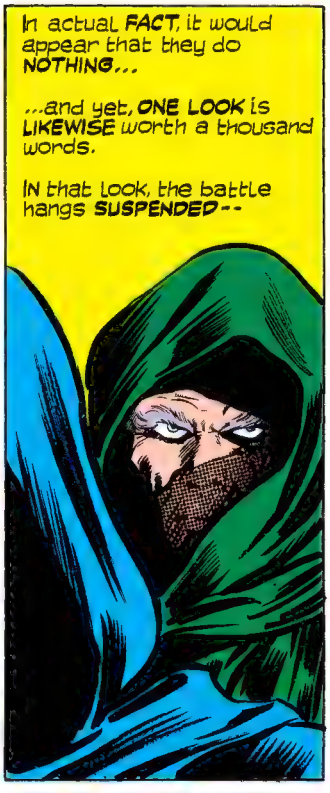
HERCULES! AT LAST! NOW SHALL HONOR PREVAIL!
HONOR? SUCH A WORD SHOULD NEVER PASS THY LIPS, LONGHAIR!
BLAMB!
I SHALL MAKE IT MY TASK TO TEACH THEE THE TRUTH OF IT!

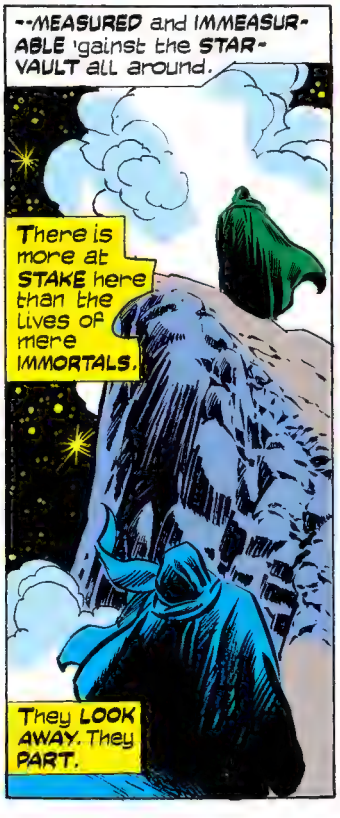

AGAIN, THOU SPEAKEST IN RIDDLES--
BLAGH! NO LONGER SHALL I SUFFER THY FALSEHOODS AND DECEPTIONS, NORTHERN SCUM!

NOW, THE TIME FOR WORDS IS PAST!
NOW, THOU SHALT SURELY DIE!

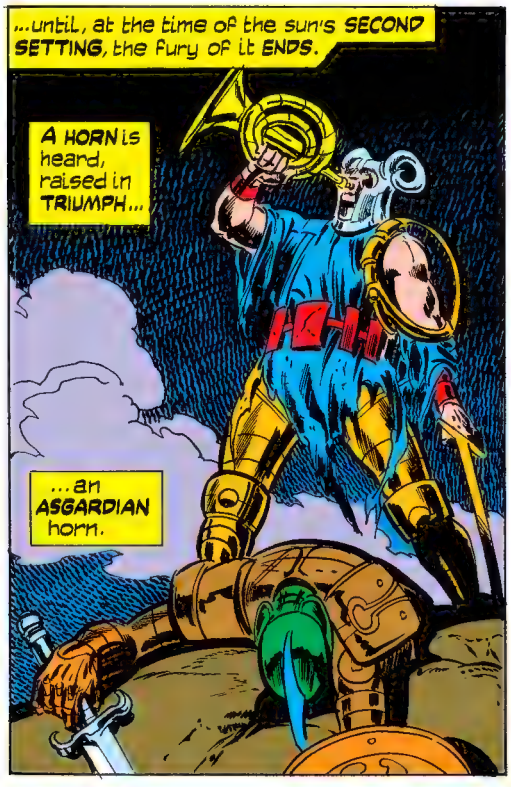

On ALL FRONTS, many battles take their TOLL, piling BODY over BODY like CORD WOOD in the AUTUMN! STILL, the battles do not SLOW!
Upon a storm-swept HILL, a figure closely wrapped against the deadly chill is waiting... watching...

...never moving, until a SECOND figure, SIMILARLY swaddled, steps slowly from the swarming mists.
They do not SPEAK.
They do not AID their FELLOWS. Or even render them FURTHER NOTICE.

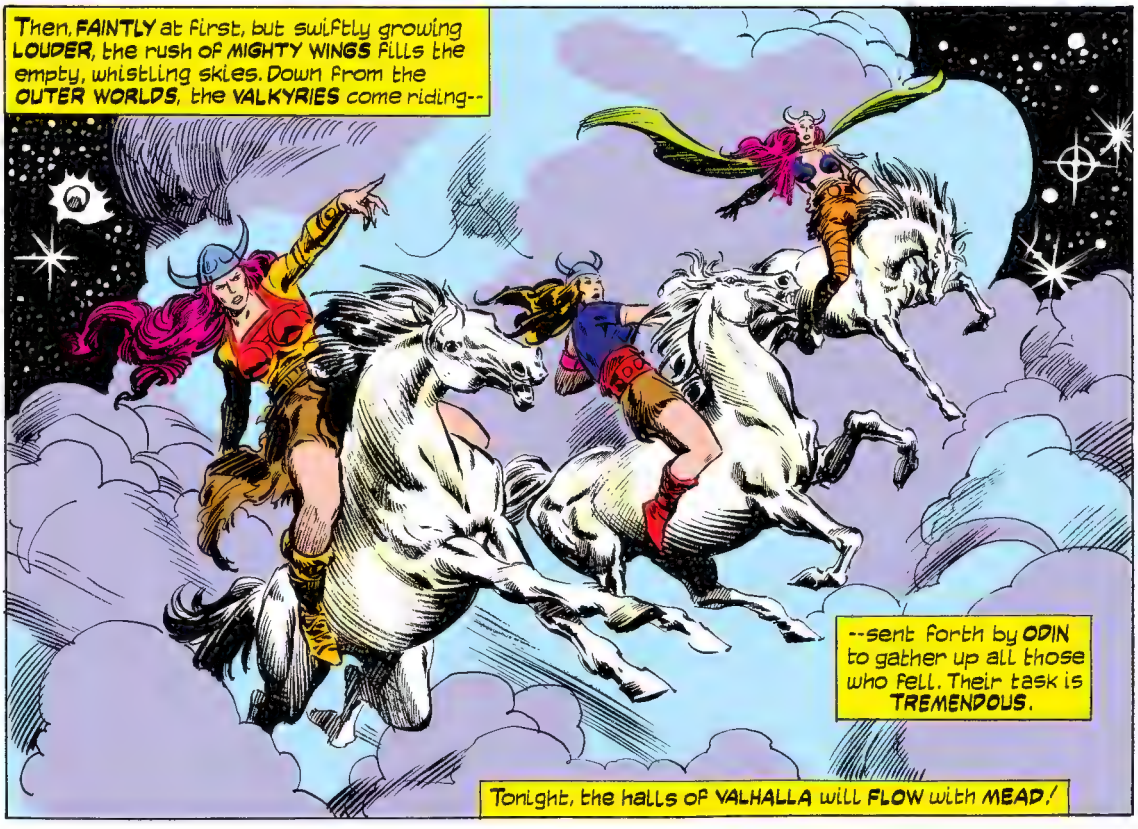

In actual FACT, it would appear that they do NOTHING...
...and yet, ONE LOOK is LIKEWISE worth a thousand words.
IN that look, the battle hangs SUSPENDED--

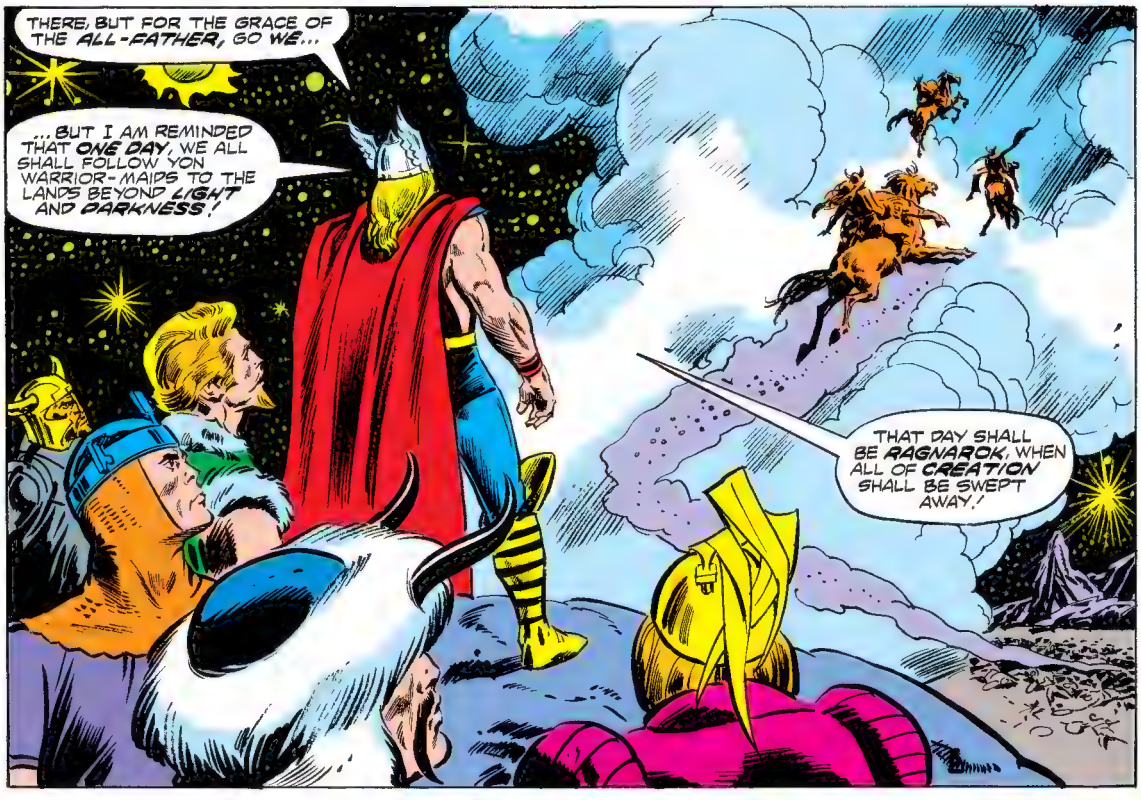

--MEASURED and IMMEASURABLE 'gainst the STARVAULT all around.
There is more at STAKE here than the lives of mere IMMORTALS.
They LOOK AWAY. They PART.

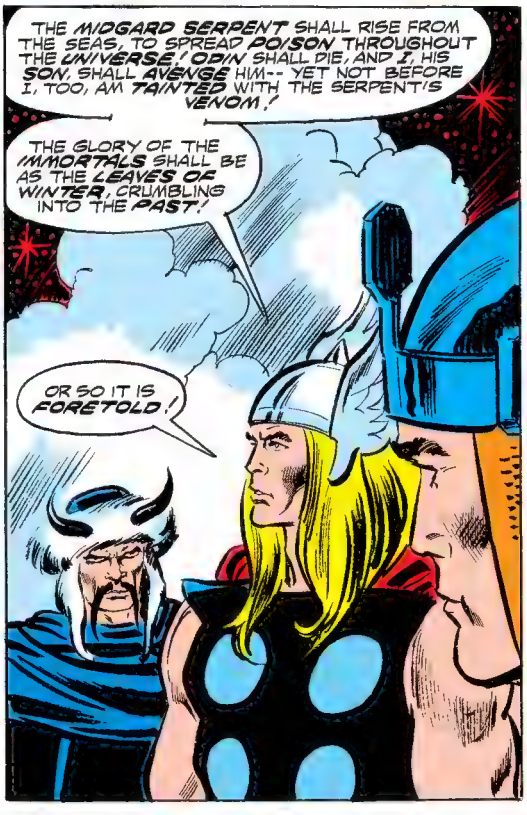
The battle GOES ON.
Fire breaks out near misdirected FLAME-ARROWS, spilling RED SHADOWS where the SUN threw NONE! STILL, the slaughter CONTINUES...
...into the EVENING, and all of the following DAY...


...until, at the time of the sun's SECOND SETTING, the fury of it ENDS.
A HORN is heard, raised in TRIUMPH...
...an ASGARDIAN horn.

Here and there, across the HORIZON, bent figures loom in still and lonely splendor. These are the SURVIVORS.
The HORIZON IS the OTHERS.


Then, FAINTLY at first, but swiftly growing LOUDER, the rush of MIGHTY WINGS fills the empty, whistling skies. Down from the OUTER WORLDS, the VALKYRIES come riding--
--sent forth by ODIN to gather up all those who fell. Their task is TREMENDOUS.
Tonight, the halls of VALHALLA will FLOW with MEAD!

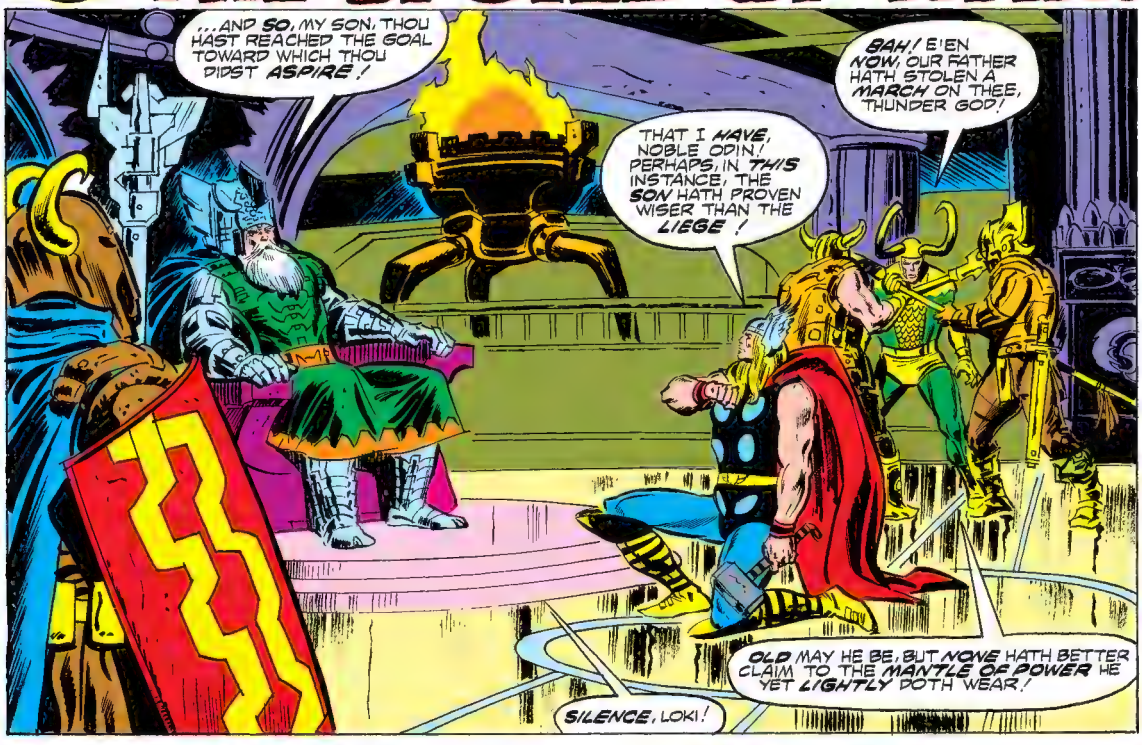

THERE, BUT FOR THE GRACE OF THE ALL-FATHER, GO WE...
...BUT I AM REMINDED THAT ONE DAY, WE ALL SHALL FOLLOW YON WARRIOR-MAIDS TO THE LANDS BEYOND LIGHT AND DARKNESS!
THAT DAY SHALL BE RAGNAROK, WHEN ALL OF CREATION SHALL BE SWEPT AWAY!

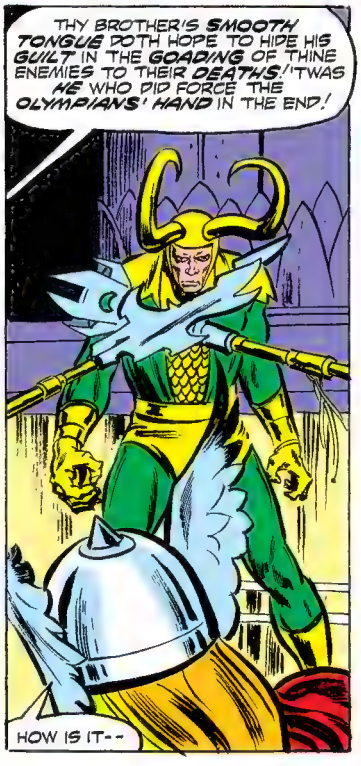

THE MIDGARD SERPENT SHALL RISE FROM THE SEAS, TO SPREAD POISON THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE! ODIN SHALL DIE, AND I, HIS SON, SHALL AVENGE HIM-- YET NOT BEFORE I, TOO, AM TAINTED WITH THE SERPENT'S VENOM!
THE GLORY OF THE IMMORTALS SHALL BE AS THE LEAVES OF WINTER, CRUMBLING INTO THE PAST!
OR SO IT IS FORETOLD!

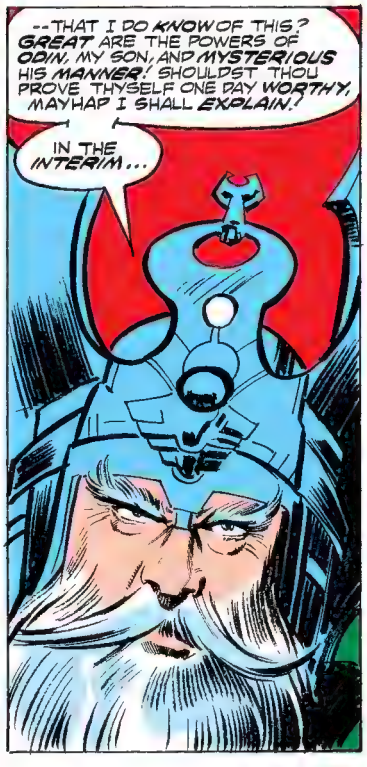
TODAY WAS NOT THAT DAY, MY COMRADES-- BUT IT WAS NEAR ENOUGH FOR ME!
YEA, WE HAVE TRIUMPHED, BUT I WONDER NOW, IF THE CAUSE WAS WORTH THIS COST!

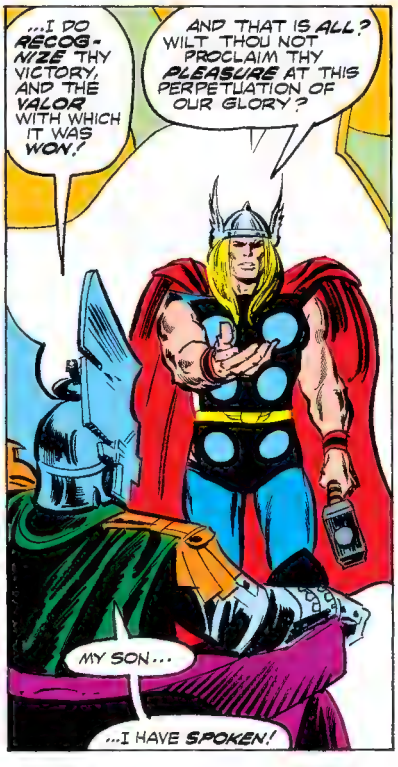
CHAPTER THREE:

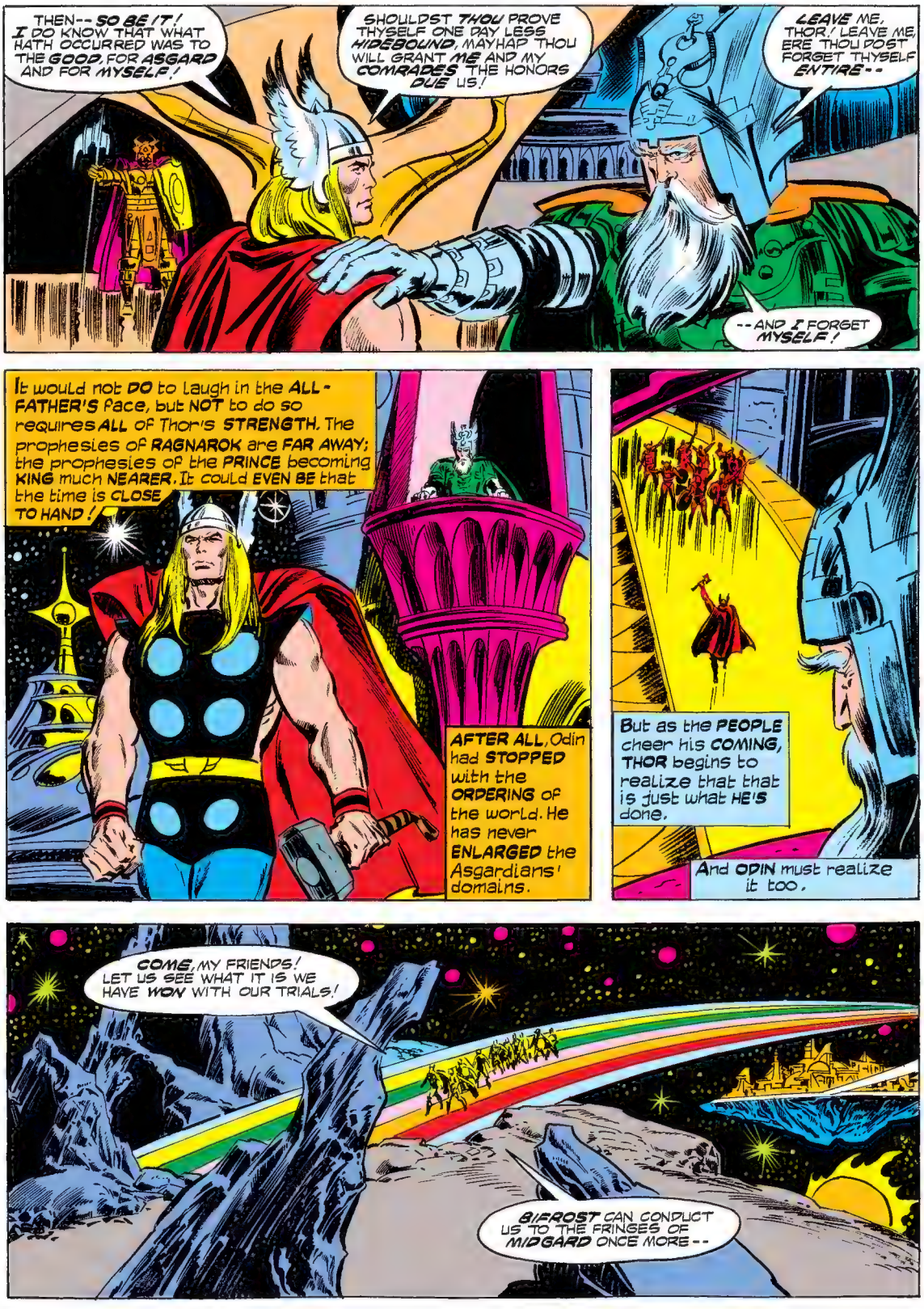
THE SPOILS OF WAR!

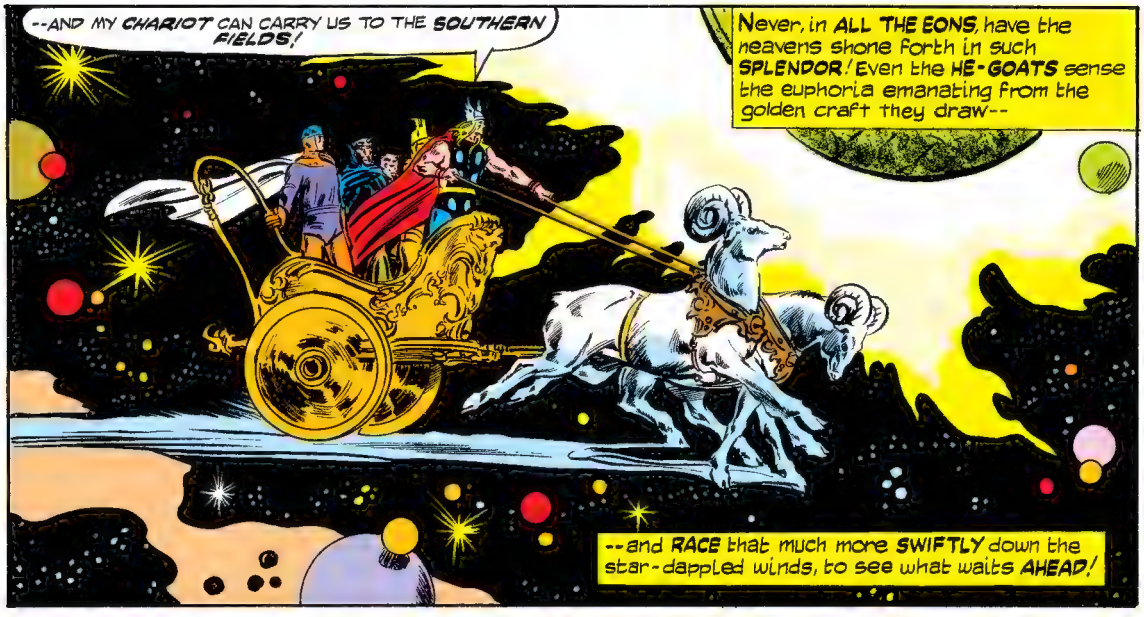

...AND SO, MY SON, THOU HAST REACHED THE GOAL TOWARD WHICH THOU DIDST ASPIRE!
THAT I HAVE, NOBLE ODIN! PERHAPS, IN THIS INSTANCE, THE SON HATH PROVEN WISER THAN THE LIEGE!
BAH! E'EN NOW, OUR FATHER HATH STOLEN A MARCH ON THEE, THUNDER GOD!
OLD MAY HE BE, BUT NONE HATH BETTER CLAIM TO THE MANTLE OF POWER HE YET LIGHTLY DOTH WEAR!
SILENCE, LOKI!

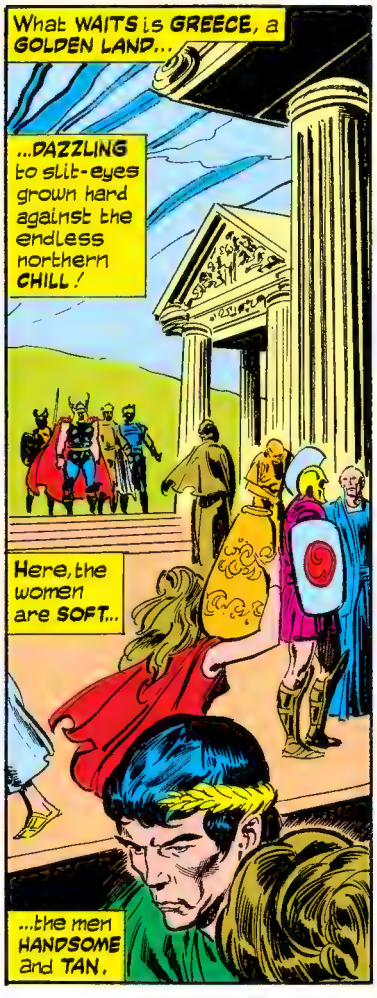

THY BROTHER'S SMOOTH TONGUE DOTH HOPE TO HIDE HIS GUILT IN THE GOADING OF THINE ENEMIES TO THEIR DEATHS! 'TWAS ME WHO DID FORCE THE OLYMPIANS' HAND IN THE END!
HOW IS IT--

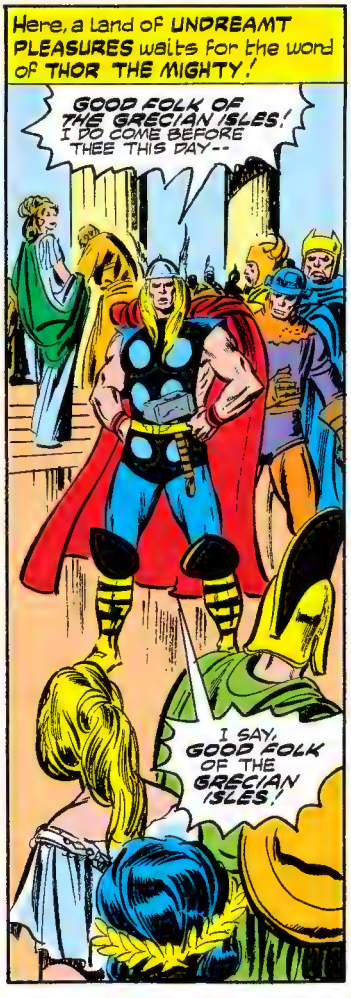

--THAT I DO KNOW OF THIS? GREAT ARE THE POWERS OF ODIN, MY SON, AND MYSTERIOUS HIS MANNER! SHOULDST THOU PROVE THYSELF ONE DAY WORTHY, MAYHAP I SHALL EXPLAIN!
IN THE INTERIM...


...I DO RECOGNIZE THY VICTORY, AND THE VALOR WITH WHICH IT WAS WON!
AND THAT IS ALL? WILT THOU NOT PROCLAIM THY PLEASURE AT THIS PERPETUATION OF OUR GLORY?
MY SON...
...I HAVE SPOKEN!

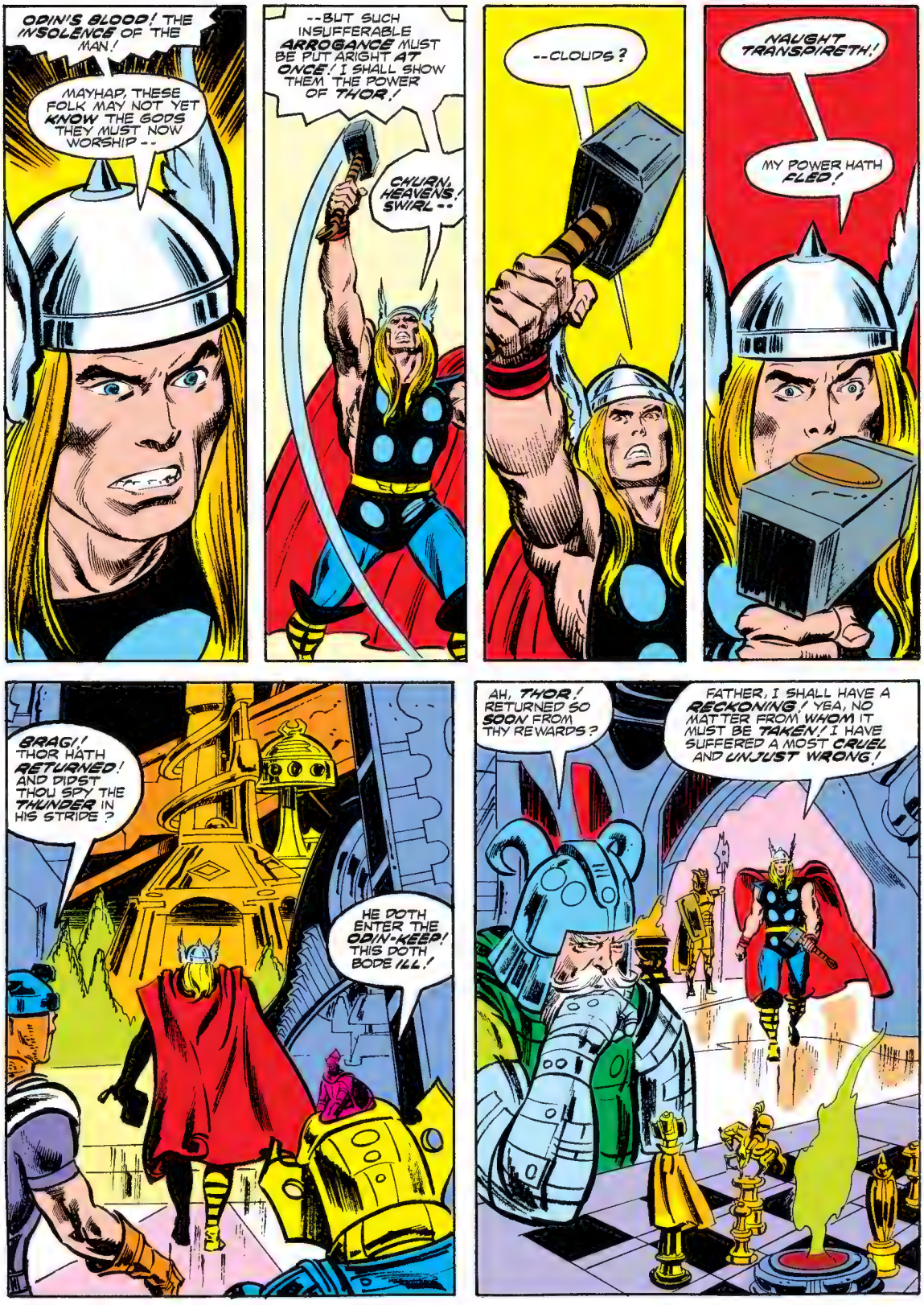

THEN-- SO BE IT! I DO KNOW THAT WHAT HATH OCCURRED WAS TO THE GOOD, FOR ASGARD AND FOR MYSELF!
SHOULDST THOU PROVE THYSELF ONE DAY LESS HIDEBOUND, MAYHAP THOU WILL GRANT ME AND MY COMRADES THE HONORS DUE US!
LEAVE ME, THOR! LEAVE ME, ERE THOU POST FORGET THYSELF ENTIRE--
--AND I FORGET MYSELF!
It would not DO to laugh in the ALL-FATHER'S face, but NOT to do so requires ALL of Thor's STRENGTH. The prophesies of RAGNAROK are FAR AWAY; the prophesies of the PRINCE becoming KING much NEARER. It could EVEN BE that the time is CLOSE TO HAND!
AFTER ALL, Odin had STOPPED with the ORDERING of the world. He has never ENLARGED the Asgardians' domains.
But as the PEOPLE cheer his COMING, THOR begins to realize that that is just what HE'S done.
And ODIN must realize it too.
COME, MY FRIENDS! LET US SEE WHAT IT IS WE HAVE WON WITH OUR TRIALS!
BIFROST CAN CONDUCT US TO THE FRINGES OF MIDGARD ONCE MORE--

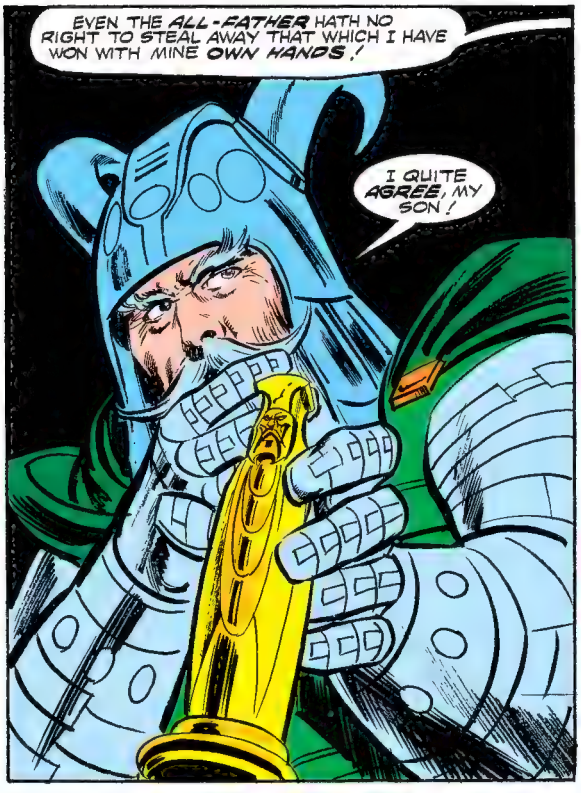

--AND MY CHARIOT CAN CARRY US TO THE SOUTHERN FIELDS!
Never, in ALL THE EONS, have the heavens shone forth in such SPLENDOR! Even the HE-GOATS sense the euphoria emanating from the golden craft they draw--
--and RACE that much more SWIFTLY down the star-dappled winds, to see what waits AHEAD!

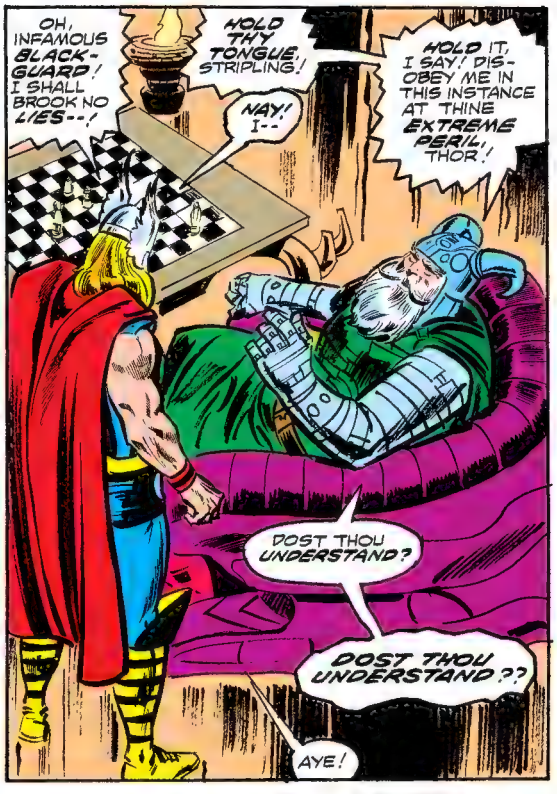

What WAITS is GREECE, a GOLDEN LAND...
...DAZZLING to slit-eyes grown hard against the endless northern CHILL!
Here, the women are SOFT...
...the men HANDSOME and TAN.

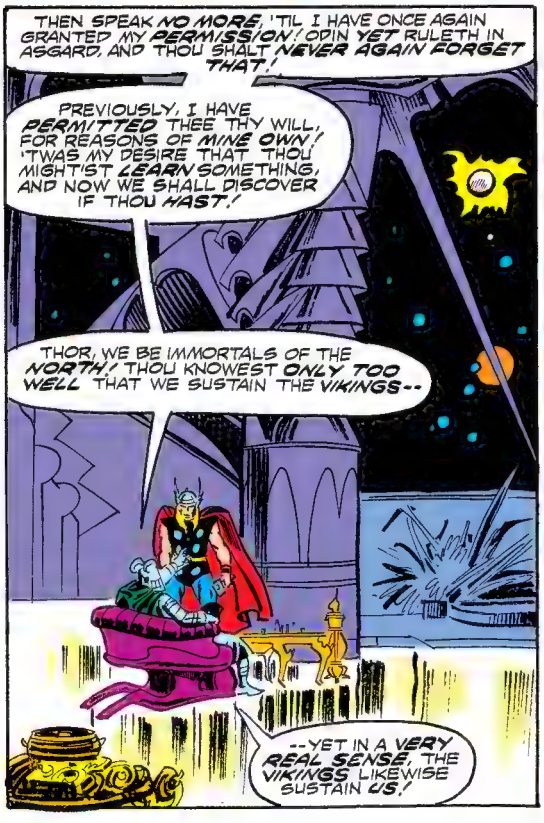

Here, a land of UNDREAMT PLEASURES waits for the word of THOR THE MIGHTY!
GOOD FOLK OF THE GRECIAN ISLES! I DO COME BEFORE THEE THIS DAY--
I SAY, GOOD FOLK OF THE GRECIAN ISLES!

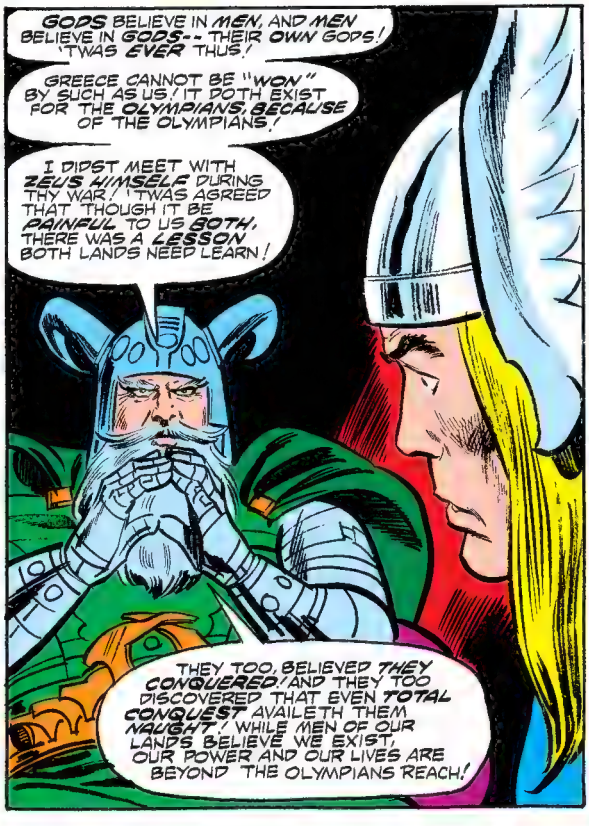
HOW PASSING STRANGE! THEY DO SEEM INDISPOSED TO PAY ME HEED! I'LL HAVE NONE OF THIS!
WE--
STAND OUT OF MY WAY, BUFFOON! THIS IS A PUBLIC THOROUGHFARE!
ONE WOULD THINK BARBARIANS WOULD LEARN OUR WAYS ERE ENTERING GLORIOUS ATHENS!

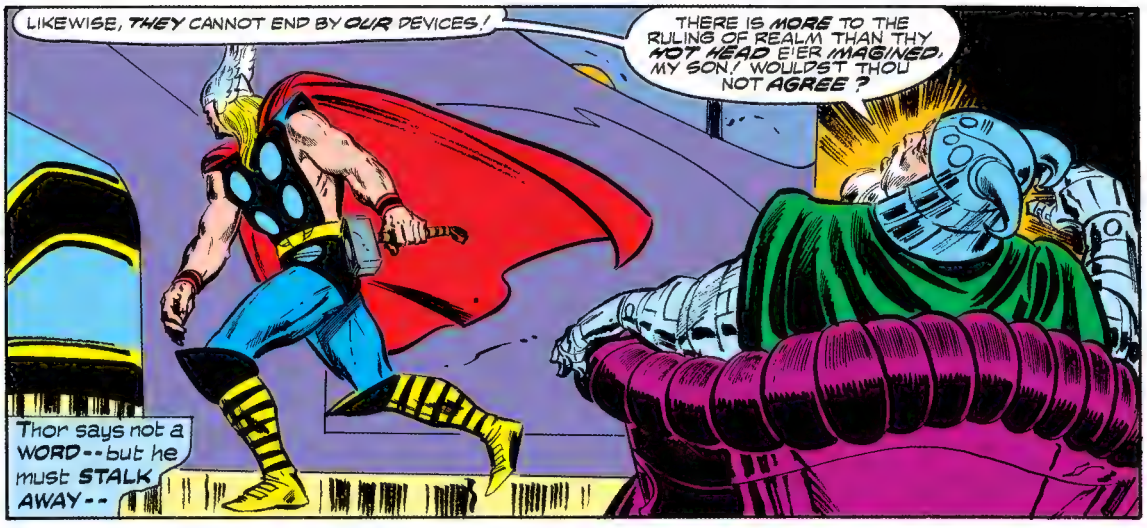

ODIN'S BLOOD! THE INSOLENCE OF THE MAN!
MAYHAP, THESE FOLK MAY NOT YET KNOW THE GODS THEY MUST NOW WORSHIP --
--BUT SUCH INSUFFERABLE ARROGANCE MUST BE PUT ARIGHT AT ONCE! I SHALL SHOW THEM THE POWER OF THOR!
CHURN, HEAVENS! SWIRL --
--CLOUDS?
NAUGHT TRANSPIRETH!
MY POWER HATH FLED!
BRAG! THOR HATH RETURNED! AND DIDST THOU SPY THE THUNDER IN HIS STRIDE?
HE DOTH ENTER THE ODIN-KEEP! THIS DOTH BODE ILL!
AH, THOR! RETURNED SO SOON FROM THY REWARDS?
FATHER, I SHALL HAVE A RECKONING! YEA, NO MATTER FROM WHOM IT MUST BE TAKEN! I HAVE SUFFERED A MOST CRUEL AND UNJUST WRONG!

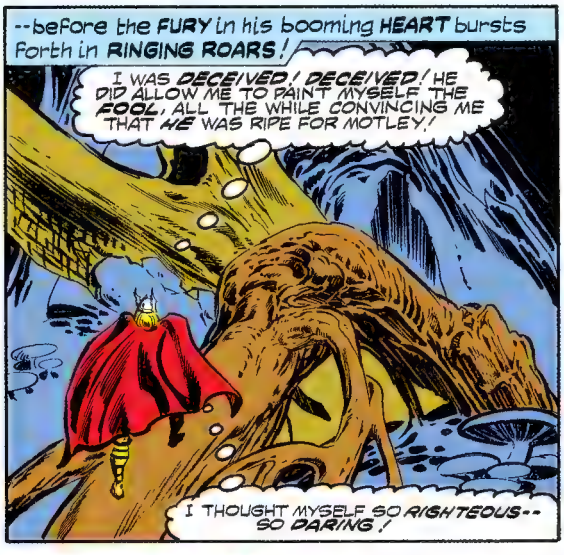

EVEN THE ALL-FATHER HATH NO RIGHT TO STEAL AWAY THAT WHICH I HAVE WON WITH MINE OWN HANDS!
I QUITE AGREE, MY SON!

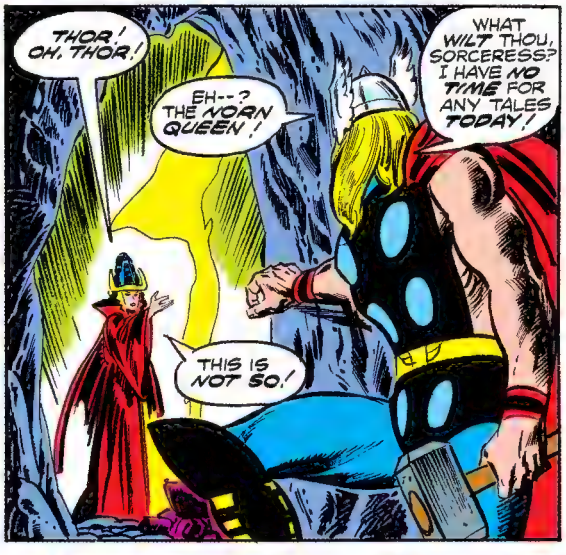

OH, INFAMOUS BLACK-GUARD! I SHALL BROOK NO LIES--!
HOLD THY TONGUE, STRIPLING!
NAY! I--
HOLD IT, I SAY! DISOBEY ME IN THIS INSTANCE AT THINE EXTREME PERIL, THOR!
DOST THOU UNDERSTAND?
DOST THOU UNDERSTAND??
AYE!

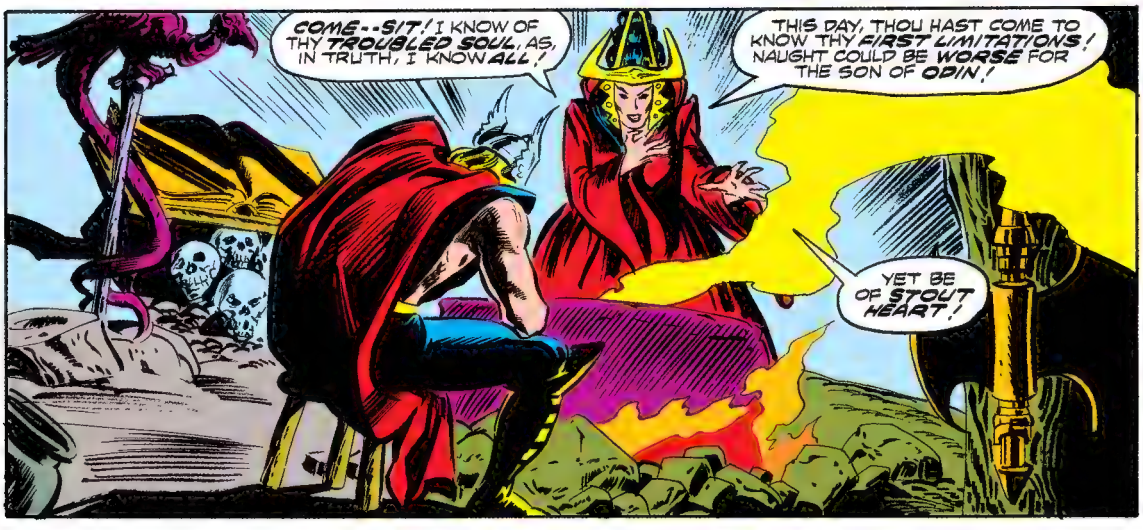

THEN SPEAK NO MORE, 'TIL I HAVE ONCE AGAIN GRANTED MY PERMISSION! ODIN YET RULETH IN ASGARD, AND THOU SHALT NEVER AGAIN FORGET THAT!
PREVIOUSLY, I HAVE PERMITTED THEE THY WILL, FOR REASONS OF MINE OWN! 'TWAS MY DESIRE THAT THOU MIGHT'ST LEARN SOMETHING, AND NOW WE SHALL DISCOVER IF THOU HAST!
THOR, WE BE IMMORTALS OF THE NORTH! THOU KNOWEST ONLY TOO WELL THAT WE SUSTAIN THE VIKINGS--
--YET IN A VERY REAL SENSE, THE VIKINGS LIKEWISE SUSTAIN US!


GODS BELIEVE IN MEN, AND MEN BELIEVE IN GODS-- THEIR OWN GODS! 'TWAS EVER THUS!
GREECE CANNOT BE "WON" BY SUCH AS US! IT DOTH EXIST FOR THE OLYMPIANS, BECAUSE OF THE OLYMPIANS!
I DIDST MEET WITH ZEUS HIMSELF DURING THY WAR! 'TWAS AGREED THAT, THOUGH IT BE PAINFUL TO US BOTH, THERE WAS A LESSON BOTH LANDS NEED LEARN!
THEY TOO, BELIEVED THEY CONQUERED! AND THEY TOO DISCOVERED THAT EVEN TOTAL CONQUEST AVAILETH THEM NAUGHT! WHILE MEN OF OUR LANDS BELIEVE WE EXIST, OUR POWER AND OUR LIVES ARE BEYOND THE OLYMPIANS REACH!


LIKEWISE, THEY CANNOT END BY OUR DEVICES!
THERE IS MORE TO THE RULING OF REALM THAN THY HOT HEAD E'ER IMAGINED, MY SON! WOULDST THOU NOT AGREE?
Thor says not a WORD--but he must STALK AWAY--


--before the FURY in his booming HEART bursts forth in RINGING ROARS!
I WAS DECEIVED! DECEIVED! HE DID ALLOW ME TO PAINT MYSELF THE FOOL, ALL THE WHILE CONVINCING ME THAT HE WAS RIPE FOR MOTLEY!
I THOUGHT MYSELF SO RIGHTEOUS--SO DARING!


THOR! OH, THOR!
EH--? THE NORN QUEEN!
WHAT WILT THOU, SORCERESS? I HAVE NO TIME FOR ANY TALES TODAY!
THIS IS NOT SO!


COME--SIT! I KNOW OF THY TROUBLED SOUL, AS, IN TRUTH, I KNOW ALL!
THIS DAY, THOU HAST COME TO KNOW THY FIRST LIMITATIONS! NAUGHT COULD BE WORSE FOR THE SON OF ODIN!
YET BE OF STOUT HEART!

IN TIME TO COME, THE VIKINGS SHALL TRAVEL TO ALL ENDS OF THE EARTH, CARRYING WITH THEM THE TALES OF THY POWER AND GLORY!
IN TIME TO COME, ALL PEOPLES WILL COME TO KNOW THEE; AND THEN--
--THOU SHALT WALK WITH FULL POWER, WHEREVER THOU WILT, IN THE COMPANY OF MEN WHOSE VISIONS I NOW INVOKE!
THEY SHALL BE CALLED--
AVENGERS!
THIS IS MY PROPHESY! THOU KNOWEST THAT I AM NEVER IN ERROR!
SO LET NOT THY HEART BE HARDENED!
GO FORTH ONCE MORE, SECURE THAT THOU HAST LOST NAUGHT IN THY WARS--
--SAVE IGNORANCE!
AYE, MILADY!
AYE!
There is nothing more to SAY...

...except to HIMSELF.
I AM YOUNG, YET! HER CONJURINGS, MORE THAN AUGHT ELSE, HAVE CAUSED ME TO REALIZE HOW YOUNG!
AND AS SUCH, I CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO UNDERSTAND ALL!
BUT THOUGH THERE MUST BE MANY TRIALS REMAINING, OF WHICH I HAVE NO NOTION, I SHALL NOT MEET THEM AS I DID THIS LAST!
I AM YOUNG, BUT I GROW OLDER! AGE WILL BRING WISDOM WITH IT! IN THIS, AT LEAST, I NEED HAVE NO DOUBT--
--FOR WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE--
--I AM THE SON OF ODIN! THE GOD OF THUNDER!
THOR, THE MIGHTY!
FINIS

Cover from *The Mighty Thor* #254 (reprinting *The Mighty Thor* #159)

Behind a wraparound cover by Jack Kirby & Frank Giacoia, *Marvel Treasury Edition* #10 reprinted the original Mangog epic from *The Mighty Thor* #154-157

The return of Marvel summer Annuals is heralded in this line-wide house ad.

MIGHTY MARVEL
DOES IT AGAIN!
HERE THEY ARE! ANOTHER ROUND OF AWESOME ANNUALS, DEFTLY DESIGNED TO LIFT YOUR SAGGING SPIRITS THROUGH THE LONG, HOT SUMMER!
KING-SIZE ANNUAL!
THE DEFENDERS
IN FINAL BATTLE!
ALL-NEW!
THOR
KING-SIZE ANNUAL!
ALL-NEW! ALL-ORIGINAL, NOVEL-LENGTH THRILLERS! YOURS FOR ONLY 50¢
POWER MAN
AVENGERS
VS. NUKLO...AND THE LIVING LASER... PLUS A RENEGADE U.S. ARMY!
EARTH SHOCK!
DOUBLE THE ACTION! DOUBLE THE THRILLS!
THE MARVEL EXPLOSION KEEPS ON HAPPENING!
--ON SALE FIRST WEEK OF AUGUST!

The Mighty Thor #253 cover production photostat featuring Jack Kirby's original rendering of Thor's face.

The Mighty Thor #249, page 2 original art
by John Buscema & Tony DeZuniga

249
2
NAY, THUNDER GOD-- THOU MAYEST NOT PASS!
ALMIGHTY ODIN HATH DECREED HE DOTH NOT WISH TO SEE THEE!
IF SO, 'TIS FOR HIM TO TELL ME, WARRIOR--
--NOT FOR SUCH AS THEE!
NE'ER BEFORE HAVE THE GATES OF THE PALACE ROYAL BEEN BARRED TO ME--
--AND NEITHER WILL IT BE SO NOW--!
ZOUNDS!!
SOME UNSEEN BARRIER IMPEDES MY PROGRESS!
I CAN DRAW NO CLOSER TO THE ALL-FATHER'S DOMICILE!
NOR SHALT THOU, MOST OFFENSIVE OFFSPRING!
FOR THY MANY SINS AGAINST THE THRONE OF THE REALM ETERNAL--
--THOU ART NOT WELCOME IN THY FATHER'S HOUSE!
MY LIEGE, DOTH MY LOVE FOR THE MORTAL JANE FOSTER SO OFFEND THEE THAT THOU WOULDST CAST OUT THINE OWN SON FROM THY HEART--
--AND TURN AGAINST THE VERY SUBJECTS WHO DO WORSHIP THEE?
VERILY, MILORD, THOU ART SUFFERING A GREAT SICKNESS OF THE SOUL!
I PRAY THEE, LET ME IN THAT I MIGHT HUMBLY SPEAK WITH THEE!
NAY, THUNDER GOD--THERE BE NOT WORDS ENOW IN ALL THE LANGUAGES OF MEN TO MEND THE RIFT THAT HATH GROWN BETWEEN US!
THINE AUDIENCE IS DENIED, REBELLIOUS ONE!
BEGONE!!

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Mighty Thor #251, page 16 original art
by John Buscema & Tony DeZuniga

Book MIGHTY THOR
251
PG. 16
MAYHAP 'TIS MERELY THAT THE LOFTY CLIMB HATH TIRED THEE! IF SO, I PRAY THEE-- TAKE COMFORT FROM THIS OLD MAN'S HAND!
NAUGHT... 'TWAS ALL FOR NAUGHT...
NAY, YOUNG ONE--'TIS NOT SO! NO MAN'S LIFE HATH EVER GONE FOR NAUGHT!
SURELY, THOU DIDST LIVE MOST NOBLY IF GRIM HELA HATH CHOSEN TO NUMBER THEE AMONGST THIS PROUD COMPANY!
I SAY THEE, YOUNG WARRIOR--MAKE THE BEST OF MATTERS HERE! VERILY, TO DWELL IN DARK VALHALLA BE NOT AS TRAGIC AS THOU DOST THINK!
AFTER A TIME, THOU SHALT COME TO ACCEPT THINGS FOR WHAT THEY ARE! MAYHAP THOU SHALT COME TO ENJOY THEM!
ACCEPT THIS MADNESS, OLD ONE?
ENJOY IT?
THOR DOTH SAY THEE-- NAY!
NAY!!
A THOUSAND TIMES DO I SAY THEE-- NAY!
THE THUNDER GOD'S FRUSTATED RAGE AND RESENTMENT FLOWS UNFETTERED THEN, AND THE CLOUD-SWEPT SKIES OF THE KINGDOM CALLED VALHALLA ROIL AND CHURN IN RESPONSE TO THEIR MASTER'S MOOD.
FOR A TIME BEYOND TIME, THIS DIMENSION OF THE DEAD KNOWS A SAVAGE STORM UNLIKE ANY IT HAS EVER KNOWN BEFORE...

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Mighty Thor Annual #5, page 27 original art
by John Buscema & Tony DeZuniga

002225 ANN. #5 29

But the OLYMPIANS, for THEIR part, are NO LESS well-represented. There is NOTHING more terrible than gods of PEACE when roused to ANGER, and their TWIN CHIEFTAINS, HERCULES and ARES have NEVER been known to FAIL!

Now, ARES is READY! Now he BELLOWS FORTH his ORDERS!

Now, the SOUTHERNERS begin to roll FORWARD--

--AND THE BATTLE IS JOINED!

ONWARD, ASGARDIANS! WE'LL SHOW THEM WHAT IT MEANS TO MOCK OUR GLORY--

--AYE, AND WE'LL SHOW THE ALL-FATHER, AS WELL!

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Mighty Thor Annual #5, page 31 original art
by John Buscema & Tony DeZuniga

002229 ANN. #5 34

HERCULES! AT LAST! NOW SHALL HONOR PREVAIL!

HONOR? SUCH A WORD SHOULD NEVER PASS THY LIPS, LONGHAIR!

BLAMB!

I SHALL MAKE IT MY TASK TO TEACH THEE THE TRUTH OF IT!

AGAIN, THOU SPEAKEST IN RIDDLES--

PEAGH! NO LONGER SHALL I SUFFER THY FALSEHOODS AND DECEPTIONS, NORTHERN SCUM!

NOW, THE TIME FOR WORDS IS PAST!

NOW, THOU SHALT SURELY DIE!

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

BIOGRAPHIES

LEN WEIN

Len Wein's career is highlighted by successes from Swamp Thing to the "All-New, All-Different" X-Men, but few fans know that the award-winning writer and editor started out as a comic-book artist.

As a teenager, Wein was tied to the hip with fellow fanzine writer Marv Wolfman, regularly skipping school to tour the DC Comics offices. After building a rapport with artists and execs like Dick Giordano, Carmine Infantino and Joe Orlando, Wein was able to credibly pitch to the editors. Though his artwork was politely passed upon, a script for *House of Mystery* was accepted and a career as a writer was born. Len attacked his new occupation with gusto, writing for DC, Marvel, Gold Key and Skywald, on everything from Western to horror, and licensed properties from Hot Wheels to Star Trek.

Although his desired career as an artist didn't quite pan out, it did give Wein insight into his collaborator's creative process and helped him garner acclaim as a writer that was "easy to draw." After super-hero work in the early '70s (Daredevil, Superman, Flash), he and artist Bernie Wrightson launched horror mainstay Swamp Thing in the pages of *House of Secrets* #92. Other notable achievements from his tenure at DC include a run on *Justice League of America* and the debut of the Human Target.

Hopping over to Marvel in 1974, where he followed Roy Thomas as editor in chief, Wein scripted several series, including *Incredible Hulk*, where he and artist Herb Trimpe introduced one of comics' most famous characters—Wolverine. That wasn't the end of his mutant milestones, as with artist Dave Cockrum he revived the dormant X-Men property with a new international cast. Its cadre of characters, including Storm, Nightcrawler and Colossus would shortly turn into comics' biggest phenomenon.

Returning to DC, Wein helped spur a creative revival at the company, editing *New Teen Titans*, *Camelot 3000* and *Swamp Thing*, which gave writer Alan Moore his American debut; shortly thereafter, Wein would preside over Moore and Dave Gibbon's groundbreaking *Watchmen*. Since then, Wein's credits in comics, animation and television writing have been numerous and well received as witnessed by his 2008 induction into the Eisner Hall of Fame.

JOHN BUSCEMA

Though primarily known for his long tenure as one of Marvel Comics' most prolific pencilers, John Buscema began his celebrated career at the age of 21 with Timely Comics. After Timely closed its in-house Bullpen, Buscema pursued comics work for a time before he left comics altogether for advertising in 1958.

When he returned to comics, however, he did so with a vengeance. Stan Lee recruited him away from advertising and quickly ensconced him into the upper ranks of Marvel artists. Picking up where *Avengers* mainstay Don Heck left off, "Big John" began what would be one of the title's definitive artistic runs. The much-anticipated *Silver Surfer* series was launched with Buscema at the helm, and top-tier books like *Fantastic Four* and *Thor* were entrusted to his care after Jack Kirby left Marvel for DC Comics.

Buscema's bold, muscular artwork commanded the comic-book page with realistic figurework that represented the next evolutionary step in post-Kirby Marvel Comics style. The respect accorded him within Marvel as an artist's artist was of such renown that he literally wrote the book on drawing, composing *How To Draw Comics the Marvel Way* with Stan Lee, the classic "how to" book in comic-book illustration.

He worked from the '70s through the '90s on nearly every title in the Marvel stable, including his personal favorite, *Conan the Barbarian*, with Roy Thomas. He retired in 1996, but returned every now and then to the comics scene until he passed away after a battle with cancer in 2002, the same year he was inducted into the Eisner Hall of Fame.

STEVE ENGLEHART

He broke into the comic industry as an artist in the early '70s, but it was Steve Englehart's strengths as a writer that helped him chart a career in comics marked by the bravery with which he incorporated current political themes into his work.

One of Englehart's first principal titles was *The Avengers*, which he quickly made his own, introducing the character Mantis and exploring her exotic roots. He also took on *The Defenders*, Marvel's famed non-team, bringing Valkyrie into the mix. Only a year into his tenure as writer on these two books, he connected them for a three-month, six-issue crossover extravaganza—"The Avengers/Defenders War," one of comics' seminal crossover events. His run on *The Avengers* would extend for another four years, including the classic "Celestial Madonna" and "Serpent Crown" story lines.

Handed *Captain America* at the height of the anti-war '70s, Englehart turned the book on its head, tapping into current events like the Watergate scandal and creating a heady mix of adventure and politics. Stories like "The Secret Empire" and "Nomad," in which Steve Rogers abandoned Cap's costume and shield to explore what his identity really meant, were challenging takes on the time-tested character.

Other titles from his first tenure at Marvel included *Doctor Strange*, *The Incredible Hulk*, *Hero for Hire*, and *Amazing Adventures* featuring the X-Men's Beast. He also introduced Shang-Chi, Master of Kung Fu, with Jim Starlin in the pages of *Special Marvel Edition* #15.

In 1977, Englehart headed to DC, where his "Dark Detective" vision of Batman with artist Marshall Rogers would later inspire filmmaker Tim Burton's approach to the first Batman feature film. He also had a memorable run writing *Justice League of America* before moving to other creative pursuits, including writing novels and developing video game concepts.

In 1983, Englehart collaborated with artist Steve Leialoha on *Coyote*, a groundbreaking independent comic. He returned to Marvel to establish a new title, *West Coast Avengers*, wrote the 12-issue limited series *Vision & The Scarlet Witch*, and long runs on *Fantastic Four* and *Silver Surfer*. In the midst of all this, Englehart wrote *Green Lantern* for DC, further developing the ranks of the Green Lantern Corps.

During the early '90s, Englehart was pivotal in the debut of Malibu's popular Ultraverse characters and also lent his talents to the Claypool Comics line. He continued with video game development and also wrote animation features like *G.I. Joe*. Recent comics work includes *Hellcat*, *Avengers: Celestial Quest*, *JLA Classified* and a return to Batman in the *Dark Detective* limited series.

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT

David Anthony Kraft has made his mark in comics as a writer, editor, publisher and industry journalist. By the time he broke into comics at the age of 22, he had launched his own science fiction/fantasy publishing company, Fictioneer, and made inroads as a rock music critic.

Kraft's tenure at Marvel began in 1974; his early years were spent editing the company's black-and-white magazines, including *The Deadly Hands of Kung Fu* and *Rampaging Hulk*. Meanwhile, he scored writing credits with stories appearing in *Tales of the Zombie* and *Haunt of Horror*. He also cracked Marvel's color comics with a pair of stories in *Giant-Size Dracula* and a five-issue run writing Man-Wolf in *Creatures on the Loose*. In 1976, Kraft also started writing for DC with work on *Secret Society of Super-Villains*, *Blackhawk* and *Kamandi*. By the following year, Kraft was back at Marvel and fully entrenched for a six-year run. On top of editing the Marvel fan magazine *F.O.O.M.*, Kraft took over writing duties on *Logan's Run* and *The Defenders*, where he would start a 21-issue run as writer. Kraft also got to wield his passion for rock music on a pair of stories in the tabloid-sized *Marvel Comics Super Special* magazine—a Beatles biography and an adaptation of the Bee Gees film *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*—both also drawn by frequent art collaborator George Pérez.

In 1980, Kraft took the reins of *Savage She-Hulk* after its first Stan Lee-scripted issue and would write the series to its finale two years later. Kraft wound up his career with Marvel writing *Captain America* and *Marvel Two-In-One*, an adaptation of *The Dark Crystal* and various children's titles for Marvel Books. After a 13-issue stint writing *World's Finest Comics* for DC, Kraft left comic scripting to focus on his own publishing pursuits, most prominently *Comics Interview* magazine, a long-running and popular insider account of the comic book industry.

PABLO MARCOS

Peruvian artist Pablo Marcos immigrated to the United States in 1970 where he soon emerged as one of the top horror illustrators in American comics. Born near Lima, Peru, in 1937, Marcos began his art career drawing political cartoons and caricatures, trial illustrations, and newspaper comic strips. After a brief move to Mexico where he continued his newspaper illustration work, Marcos took his wife and four children to New York City. There, he broke into the American comics market with Warren and then Skywald, where he began his long love affair with horror comics, illustrating stories for *Psycho* and *Nightmare*. When Skywald co-founder Sol Brodsky returned to Marvel, he took Marcos with him to illustrate stories in Marvel's line of black-and-white horror magazines, including *Monsters Unleashed*, *Savage Tales* and *Tales of the Zombie*. It was in the latter title where he made his biggest impression, drawing nearly all of the tales of zombie icon Simon Garth. Marcos also drew color comic books, penciling issues of *Thor*, *Conan the Barbarian* and *Marvel Two-In-One* for Marvel, and Man-Bat stories in *Detective Comics* for DC. Marcos was also an accomplished inker, turning in a sterling run inking John Buscema on *Conan*. In the late '80s, Marcos returned to penciling with a long run on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Today, Marcos is still active in the comics scene, drawing covers and interior pages for Dynamite's *Red Sonja*.

Biographies researched and written by John Rhett Thomas

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NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. VOLS. 1-3
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THE MARVEL AGE

It was August 1961 and change was hitting the newsstands. *Fantastic Four* #1 did not feature the squeaky-clean heroes of yesteryear. These were real characters placed in extraordinary circumstances. They lived together, they fought among themselves—and sometimes, they even lost to the bad guys. This was more than a change in attitude: It was the beginning of something entirely different—the Marvel Age of Comics!

Thanks to the fertile imaginations of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, an unending list of heroes followed the FF with ever-increasing acclaim and popularity: the Amazing Spider-Man, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, Iron Man and the X-Men, to name but a few. These were the Marvel heroes, born of conflict and a continuous struggle to balance human lives with superhuman responsibilities.

The *Marvel Masterworks* series was created to give comic-book readers everywhere the chance to experience the greatest comics the world has known as they were originally presented.

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THE GOLDEN AGE

As the Great Depression wore on and the specter of war hung over the heads of all Americans, a new entertaining escape from the newspapers' horrifying realities was born: the comic book. Within their four-color pages, larger-than-life super heroes could make short work of America's foes, giving readers of all ages hope for victory against the real-life enemies that faced the United States.

At the forefront of this new medium was Timely Comics, a young company staffed by such legendary talents as Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, Joe Simon, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee. These skilled writers and artists created a vast array of characters that would give rise to the Marvel Universe!

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THE ATLAS ERA

Seeing super heroes waning, Timely Comics evolved into Atlas Comics and took on a vast new range of genres: science-fiction tales of outer space adventures and unimaginable monsters; realistic war comics; buxom jungle heroines; horror comics that would become the center of a moral panic that rocked the industry; and romance comics for the emerging teen audience. Even the classic costumed heroes of the '40s retooled to take on the threat of Communism. From Western gunfighters to crime to horror, Atlas had it all!

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